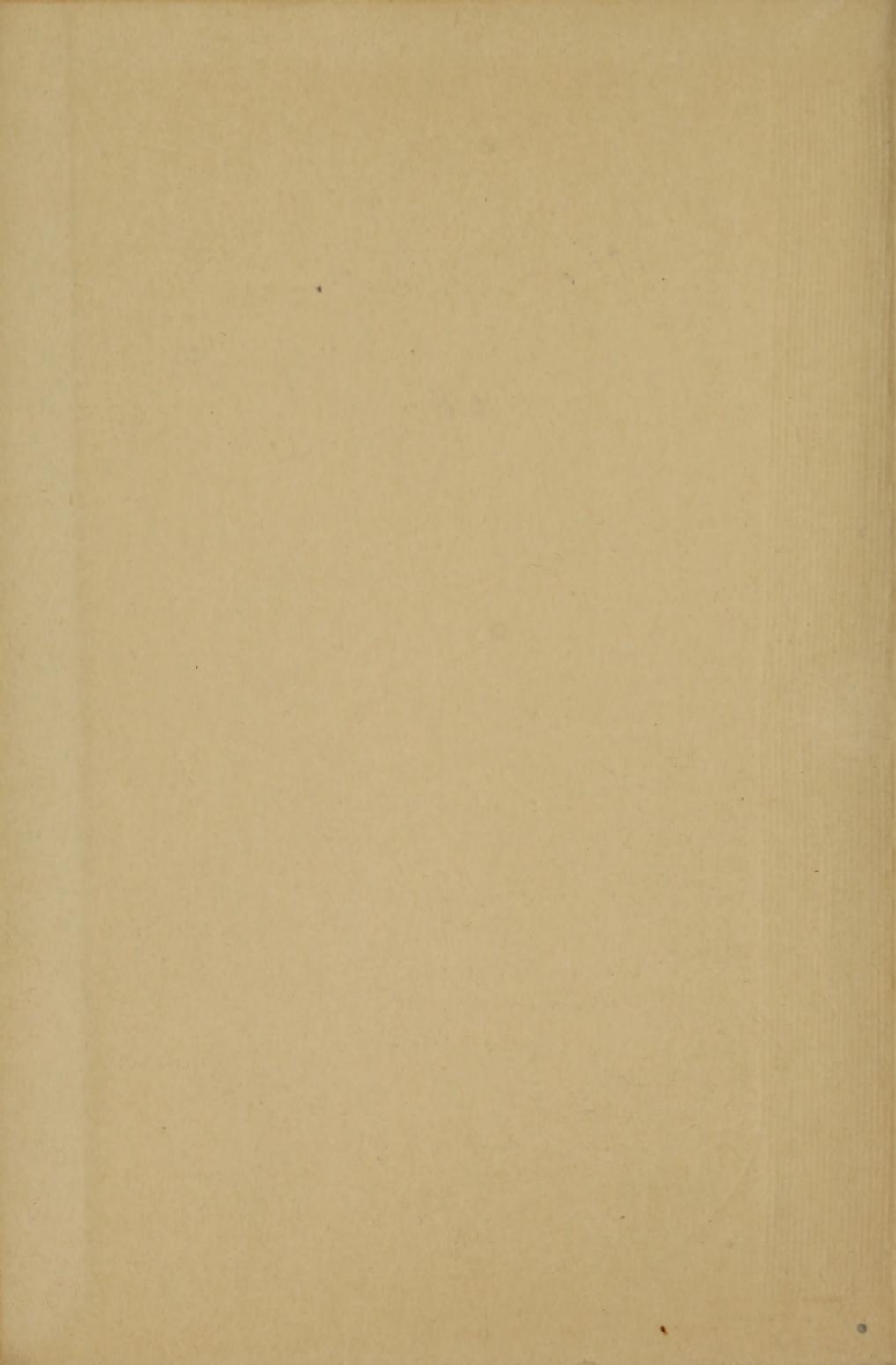


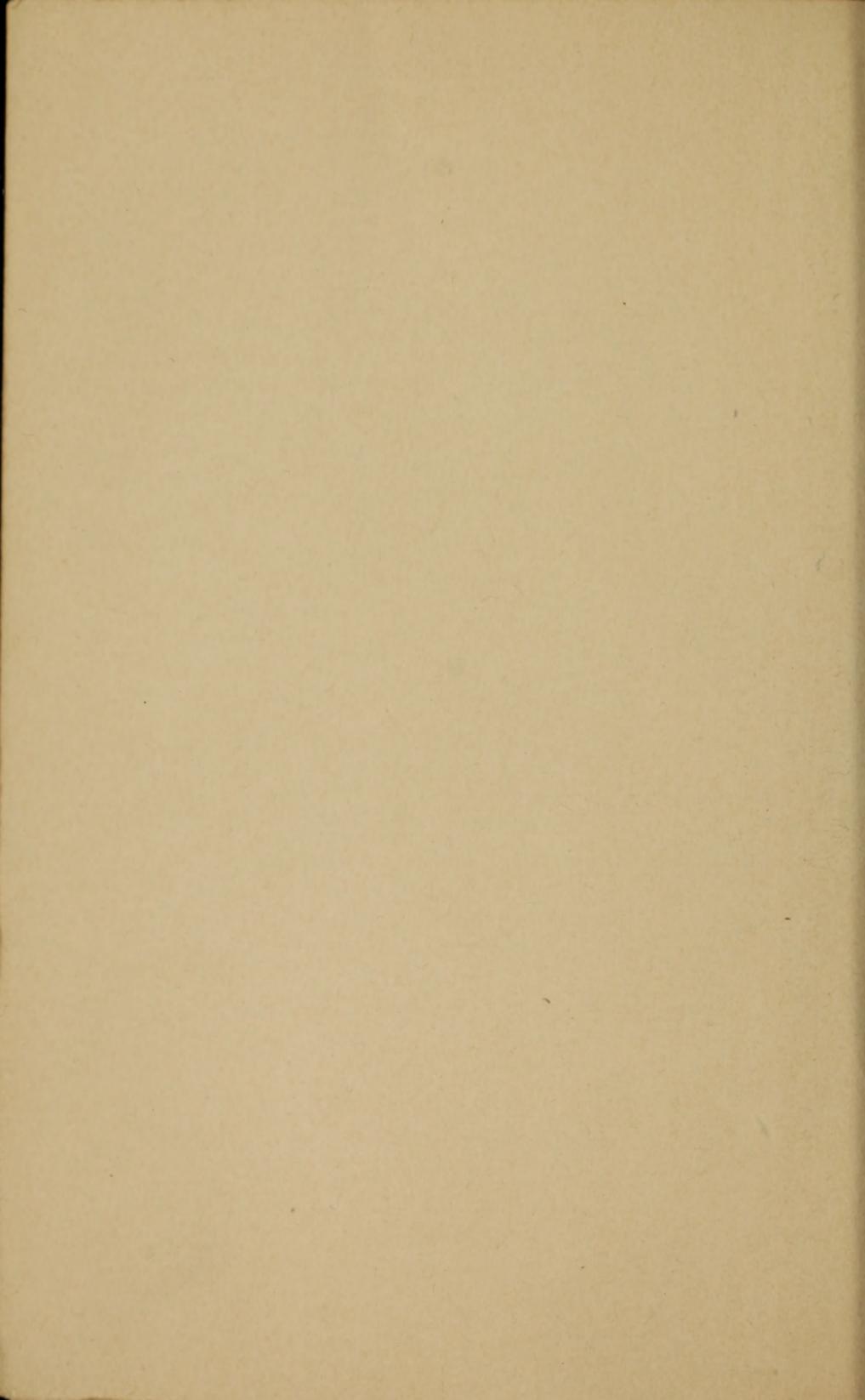
JOURNEY'S END

EDNA A. BROWN



Alice Haines

Christmas 1938



JOURNEY'S END

BOOKS BY
EDNA A. BROWN

FICTION

THAT AFFAIR AT ST. PETER'S
JOURNEY'S END

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

FOUR GORDONS
UNCLE DAVID'S BOYS
WHEN MAX CAME
ARNOLD'S LITTLE BROTHER
ARCHER AND THE "PROPHET"
THE SPANISH CHEST
AT THE BUTTERFLY HOUSE
RAINBOW ISLAND

FOR YOUNGER READERS

THE SILVER BEAR

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO., BOSTON

JOURNEY'S END

By
EDNA A. BROWN



BOSTON
LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.

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Journey's End

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To
HARRIET and JOE

of
3000 feet

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“O traveller, who hast wandered far
'Neath southern sun and northern star,
Say where the fairest regions are!

“Friend, underneath whatever skies
Love looks in love-returning eyes,
There are the bowers of paradise.”

—*Clinton Scollard.*

ut becubum dñe iher. castellani. Q.
(61) credi in bonum tuum et misericordiam tuam.
Ego adorans tecum ogle mentis quae
milia et centaria dico omnia tua. dñe
deus pater misericordia et misericordia tua
liberans me a peccatis. ad te mea
sicut lumen in tenebris. sicut aqua in
deserto. sicut panis in fome. sicut
vita in mortali corporali mortali vita.

Journey's End

CHAPTER I

IN WHICH AMORY AND CAROLINE DISCUSS THE PAST,
PRESENT, AND FUTURE

AT the bottom of her heart, Mrs. Jermain Chittick did not really expect her brother to remain long as her guest, and was prepared to hear at the close of the third evening that he was leaving in the morning for Freeport. She received the announcement with only a conventional expression of regret, but shortly followed him to his room.

“Let me come in, Amory,” she said as he opened the door in answer to her knock. “You don’t look sleepy and I want to talk. Go on with your packing. Tell me why you want to go back to that forsaken place.”

“It’s my home, Carol, and I don’t consider it forsaken,” replied her brother. Caroline, in her flame-colored evening dress, her dusky hair and white face thrown into relief by the dark velvet of the chair into which she had flung herself, was in

Amory's eyes far more attractive than when he saw her half an hour before, bent over a bridge table, a cigarette between her fingers. Now, she seemed more like the sister of his boyhood, who sometimes spent the long summers in the ancestral Russell home at Freeport.

"Uncle Robert is dead," Caroline observed dispassionately, "two years ago."

"That is all the more reason why I should go to Aunt Eunice. I half feel that I did wrong not to come back from France as soon as I got my discharge after the armistice, but I had that opportunity to work in Paris. Aunt Eunice wrote me to stay, and it was fine practice, but now I want to see Freeport again. Of course you feel differently, Carol. Grandmother Payne brought you up, but I was only four when I came to Journey's End. I don't know any other home nor any parents but Aunt Eunice and Uncle Robert."

"It's queer," remarked Caroline, "how different our lives have been. I wonder if it was quite fair."

"To which of us?" asked Amory.

"Whether it was fair to separate us and put us in such different environments. There were you, brought up as a Friend in old Freeport, with all that implies, sent to Friends' School and to a Quaker college, and everything was exactly opposite with me."

"I don't see that we had any choice in the matter nor did those who were responsible for us. They only carried out directions. Father promised Mother that you should be taken to Grandmother Payne. And when he died so soon afterwards, it was perhaps equally natural that he should want me to stay with his people."

"Poor Father!" said Caroline. "Imagine him running away from college at twenty-one to marry Mother, and she was only seventeen! Crazy children that they were and yet they knew what love was. And now I am twenty-eight and have been married seven years. Of course you must go to see Aunt Eunice but why should you settle in Freeport? I know all about you, Amory; I know that you graduated from Johns Hopkins 'way up in your class, and that you did brilliant work in France. And now you are back you ought to start practising medicine in some place where your abilities will be appreciated.

"If you go back to Freeport," Caroline went on, surveying him through half-closed lashes, "I can prophesy exactly what will happen to you. In ten days the holy calm of Journey's End will soak you through and through like an opiate. You will be bound hand and foot. You will be like the lotus-eaters Aunt Eunice used to read us about from the leather-covered Tennyson. You will settle

down and put out your shingle in Freeport and attend meeting on First Days and live in lethargy until the day of doom."

Amory, sitting on the edge of the table, his hands in his pockets, merely smiled at this graphic picture.

"You will marry," Caroline continued, cocking her head at him, "a girl who parts her hair in the middle, a girl with big eyes and the disposition of an angel and the ambition of a cow. And the worst of it is that you will be contented, Amory."

"What do you want me to do?" asked her brother, grinning in spite of himself.

"You are too good for such a fate," pronounced Caroline. "You are too good-looking, Amory. You really have a manner; even I perceive it. You are actually distinguished and that little air of courteous dignity suits your style to a T. You have beautiful gray eyes and a mouth like a Greek statue, and if you weren't my brother, I should fall upon your neck and insist on remaining there!"

Amory Russell received this remark in scornful silence. Caroline broke into a peal of laughter.

"You blushed!" she accused him. "I wanted to see if I could make you. Amory, you'd be a howling success as a New York physician. You've the necessary looks, you've the manner, you've the money to start as you ought. In two years you'd

be one of the fashionable ladies' doctors of the city."

"That is the last thing I care to be," said Amory curtly. "A fashionable doctor and a fashionable minister can be classed alike as mighty poor stuff."

Caroline grew serious. "But don't waste yourself on Freeport," she repeated. "It *will* be a waste, Amory. Settle in New York and let me introduce you. I can do a lot to get you started."

"I must go to Freeport and see Aunt Eunice," said her brother decidedly. "What I do then will depend on circumstances. It isn't a question of the money I can make, Carol. As you say, I can afford to start where I choose. Not every doctor can do that. But if Aunt Eunice needs me, I owe it to her to consider that in making my plans."

"I went down when Uncle Robert died," observed Caroline, still watching him critically. "It was the depth of winter, and everything was pretty ghastly. I thought it was my duty to go, especially since you were across and couldn't be there."

"Come down with me to-morrow," proposed Amory. "Can't you chuck all this and spend the summer there? We'll get out the *Whitewing* and sail the harbor and picnic on Clam Island. We'll scare up some horses and ride the dunes and the beach as we used to do, with the wind in our hair and the spray in our faces."

For a moment Caroline's eyes widened and the tired expression left them.

"There *was* rather a peace about Journey's End," she said half to herself. "Somehow one *wanted* to be good and there were pleasant thoughts to think. I wonder how it would be now if I had been the one left in Freeport and you had gone to Philadelphia."

"I can't imagine," said Amory frankly.

"I can't see myself growing up in Journey's End," Caroline went on, the far-away look vanishing from her eyes. "Bad little black sheep that I was, I should have worried poor unworldly Aunt Eunice into an early grave. No, it was best as it was. At least, I haven't her death on my conscience."

"Come home with me, Carol. You're looking rather seedy. Remember your little brother is an M. D. now. Your face tells tales."

"Then I must have it enameled," said Caroline, rising briskly from her chair. "I'm perfectly well and I can't come with you, old chap; it couldn't be managed. After all, perhaps New York isn't the place for you. You deserve a pretty good fate. I shan't see you before you go to-morrow, so give my love to dear Aunt Eunice and to old Lydia, and—yes, to the girl I might have been."

Caroline kissed her brother, and for a moment

Amory held her close. Carol was only two years older than he, and life, which looked so promising to him, seemed to have done something rather cruel to her. There was her lovely home on the Hudson,—a childless home—where she and her handsome, heavy-featured husband lived side by side, the currents of their lives scarcely touching. To Amory, fresh from experiences that were very real and terribly tragic, Caroline's existence seemed pitifully frivolous and sadly out of tune. It was stamped with unrest and she, like all the world, seemed looking for something, but did she, more than any of the others, know what she sought?

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH AMORY MISSES A TRAIN AND VISITS THE D'ESTE PRINCESS

DR. RUSSELL left Cornwall the next morning, stopped in New York for some hours and finally missed his connections at Providence. Since there was no possible hope of getting through to Freeport that night, he checked his bag at the station and went out in search of a restaurant.

The six o'clock high tide of automobiles and electric cars was gradually receding and the wide expanse of Exchange Place was only ordinarily crowded as Amory surveyed it from the top of the viaduct. To a casual glance it looked as though one might possibly reach the corner of Dorrance Street without losing either life or limb. The dangers of Exchange Place were not unknown to Amory, for as a boy he had attended school in Providence.

A sudden memory of that vanished time made him swerve as he crossed the little park before the station to look closely at the fountain ornamenting

the slope. Through some momentary aberration of the sculptor, one of its figures possessed six toes, and Amory smiled involuntarily as he saw that years had brought no correction of the bronze deformity.

Once across the square, he hesitated between two hotels and finally chose a small restaurant. Judging from their appearance the few patrons were college boys from the university on the hill, and a pale-faced cashier was the only woman in evidence.

The sight of the boys revived in Amory a recollection of his own school days, and when he had completed his meal and paid his check he sauntered into the warm twilight of the long June evening, directing his steps toward College Hill, that steepest of paths toward the shrine of education. The university at its head was not his own Alma Mater, but he was sufficiently familiar with its campus and buildings to be interested in seeing them again.

For an instant he stopped to look at the clock-tower dominating the campus. Day after day, hundreds of boys hurrying from one recitation to another, glanced at its face, carelessly, thoughtlessly, quite unconscious that they were absorbing as a part of their future lives its memorial message: **LOVE IS STRONG AS DEATH.** But in time to come, that truth would recur to many as a golden gleam through the years.

In the vicinity of the college the East Side had not changed very much, though some new buildings had been erected and more of the neighboring houses now seemed devoted to Greek-letter societies. The narrow streets, with their curiously pious names, Benefit, Benevolent, Hope, were yet bordered by prosperous, well-kept homes, but the cable-cars of Amory's day no longer plunged headlong down the cliff-like street leading to the lower level of the town. All car-lines appeared to have vanished from that section of the city, and it was not until he caught sight of an electric tram disappearing into a yawning gulf that Amory recalled the existence of a tunnel below the hill.

There were people in Providence who would give him a warm welcome should he present himself at their hospitable doors, for the old city of Roger Williams still harbored a considerable number of the Society of Friends. And to be a Russell of Freeport, Massachusetts, was open sesame to the household of any Friend.

Amory did not feel inclined to ring the bell of any of the mansions which would have greeted him warmly. He craved no human companionship, but rather was contented to revive memories long dormant, suggested by the streets and sights about him.

The Friends' School, now flourishing under an-

other name, had enlarged its equipment and boundaries since Amory's day. School was over for the year and the buildings looked dark and unoccupied as he wandered through the grounds, looking for familiar landmarks. He found the big tree where he and his chum, Putnam Avery, used to conceal themselves among the foliage to read lurid and light literature looked upon askance by those in authority. He saw, too, the windows of the room he and Put shared for three years. Putnam was sleeping under the poppies of France now, unspared by his Quaker blood.

Darkness was falling over the city when Amory completed his stroll and returned to lower levels. On the way down the hill he passed a building brilliantly lighted and with huge bill-boards announcing a Venetian carnival for the benefit of the Red Cross. Amory looked at his watch. Only a quarter to nine and his train did not leave until ten. Following a sudden impulse, which at the time he could not explain and afterwards could not account for, he went up the steps of the hall, paid his admission fee and entered.

Inside, the carnival was at its height in a really charming setting of Venetian scenes and palaces, where strayed velvet-robed doges and stately dames who looked as though they might have stepped straight from the pictures of Titian and Veronese.

Only a small portion of the assembly was in costume, but the little leavened the whole. Amory bought some candy from a small boy in a blue doublet and white silk hose; a rose from a girl who might have danced out of Botticelli's *Spring*, had that astute painter averted his eye for a second.

On either side of the hall stood booths for the sale of those extraordinary and nameless articles which appear like sporadic growths in the wake of every church bazaar and charity entertainment. To avoid them Dr. Russell steered a straight course down the middle of the room. His natural courtesy made it difficult to refuse any request from a lady, and to-night it was obviously impossible, a bird of passage as he was, to load himself with inconvenient purchases.

At the extreme end, he paused by a little platform to take a general view of the scenery and the company, a view which he found not without interest, while wholly unconscious that he himself was an object of interest to others. Caroline was right in telling him that he was "distinguished"; to a marked degree he possessed that subtle characteristic which is a quality neither wholly physical nor entirely mental. In Amory's case, it was emphasized by the poise and calm acquired from his Quaker home and training, and by a certain spiritual expression, which passing years had increased

rather than lessened. He looked unusual and received more than a few lingering glances.

Close at hand stood a black-covered booth, its sable hangings adorned with silver stars and crescents and bearing above its curtained entrance the inscription :

“Have Your Palm Read by the Famous Venetian Soothsayer, Beatrice, the Last of the D’Estes.”

Dr. Russell’s attention was attracted by a couple who emerged laughing from this booth, by a girl who came out looking startled and awestruck and by an old lady who passed him saying to her companion, “My dear, she told me things *nobody* knows but myself!”

Obeying another abrupt impulse, he lifted the curtain and entered the booth, to find himself preceded by a boy and girl both about twenty.

The girl was slender, dark, and dressed in a frock of a peculiar shade of blue, cut to leave bare her throat and arms. The black evening coat of her companion accentuated the high lights of her gown.

The interior of the cabinet, also draped in black, was unrelieved by silver ornaments. Under the single drop-light stood a small table, holding a red velvet cushion. Behind the table sat a figure in

costume and head-dress to resemble the famous painting of the D'Este princess.

Upon the cushion the girl laid a pair of athletic-looking hands, and the palmist was tracing one line after another with a little ivory rod. No one spoke, and only the hum of the crowd outside penetrated the booth.

“ You have had a happy life,” said the palmist at length. “ Friends, health, prosperity, have all come your way. You are intelligent and up to this time have been fortunate, though you have permitted opportunity more than once to knock unheeded at your door. You are fond of books and of flowers, and of venturesome sports; your intentions are usually good and you are at present living a life that will not satisfy you for long,—does not really satisfy you now. You have qualities which your present surroundings do not encourage. You have naturally an affectionate, loyal disposition; you are a good friend and a pugnacious enemy. You are quick to anger, but you are as often angry at yourself as at others, and you are very generous. You will not easily love a man enough to marry him; you prefer to have a good time as a girl, but if you chance to meet the man who is capable of awaking your higher nature, you have great possibilities of development.”

“ But am I going to meet him?” asked the girl,

half laughing. Her voice, as Amory noticed, was clear and low.

"I am no prophetess," said the palmist. "I see only what is written. You will marry somebody in the end, but whether the right person, I cannot say. And 'when Love comes to call thee, arise and follow fast.' "

The palmist spoke the last sentence in a tone that seemed absorbed. Suddenly she looked up at the girl's face, looked quickly and searchingly. To Amory in the shadow, listening half in amusement, the expression of her eyes was distinct, but the girl and her escort remained unaware of the glance. Their eyes were intent on the ivory rod.

"You will have a trying road to travel," continued the soothsayer after a moment, and in an ordinary tone. "You are courageous by nature and you will need courage, for I cannot interpret the sign-posts of that path."

"For goodness' sake, do be more explicit," said the girl.

"That I cannot be, simply because the disaster which seems to threaten you, while real, is veiled. There is one influence in your life, and that a strong one, which is in your favor. I believe that it comes from a woman. But in a short time you will have a rocky path to travel, and I can only warn you to take each step with care."

There was a note of finality in her voice as she turned to the boy upon whose palms she read only an ordinary prosperous future.

"No rocky road to Dublin for me, Eve," he said, as they rose to leave, and for the first time became aware of Amory in the shadowy background. The girl scarcely glanced at him, thinking he had just entered; the boy, with quicker intuition or less self-absorption, suspected that he had overheard and gave him an impertinent stare.

As the curtain dropped behind them, Amory, seeing that it was expected, took one of the vacated chairs and laid his hands, palm upward, on the cushion.

As before, there was a pause while the ivory rod traced several lines.

"Your hands are those which heal," said the palmist thoughtfully, "gentle hands which help the pain of the world; strong, too, in that they are gentle."

Amory smiled inwardly. Could any trace of iodoform linger about him? Hardly possible, since he was but four days off the Cunard liner and had not been near a hospital for two weeks. The slender rod continued its slow movement.

"When the toiler in brain and the healer of pain shall be classed with the men who pray," murmured the palmist in an abstracted manner.

Suddenly the little rod stopped short, its pointed end pricking Amory's palm. The D'Este princess looked him straight in the face. "Did you know that girl who just went out?" she demanded abruptly.

"I never saw her before. I am a stranger here. I doubt if I should recognize her again. Why?"

"This is the strangest thing that has happened yet," said the palmist, laying down her pointer and propping her chin in both hands.

"Why did I ask whether you knew her? Because the lines of your hand indicate that in the immediate future your life will be involved in the identical disaster that threatens hers."

"But that, you know, is nonsense," said Amory very gently.

"Nothing is nonsense," sighed the palmist. "Everything has a meaning, if we have intelligence enough to read it. And half the time we are needlessly deaf and blind to things that are clamoring to be understood."

"But you don't really believe this yourself, do you?" asked Amory in the same persuasive manner.

"I don't know what I believe nor whether I believe anything. Every time I am persuaded into doing this, I regret yielding. I seem to possess

some queer gift, perhaps a mere trick of receiving impressions from other minds, perhaps a real power. All I can tell you is that I do not consciously deceive people and that I am startled again and again by the fulfilment of what I have read in their hands."

"Can you tell me the nature of this threatened danger?" inquired Amory after a moment during which the palmist seemed wrapped in thought.

"That is just the trouble," she replied, picking up the little rod again. "I see the disaster, which may or may not be averted, but I can tell you no more than I could tell that girl. I can only give a very trite piece of advice; think twice, yes, three times, before you take any important step in life, and ask advice, not only of your heart, but of your intellect as well."

As the palmist spoke, the curtain of the booth was again lifted to admit a group of merry young people.

"Shall I finish?" she went on. "I can tell you your faults and your virtues, if you care to have them catalogued."

"With the first I am unfortunately only too well acquainted, and the second do not flourish in lime-light. I thank you."

Amory laid a bill upon the cushion and left the booth. Once again in the hall, he wandered in and

out among the crowd, looking for the girl in blue, but without result. He went away just in time to catch his train, still trying to fix in his mind a picture of her face. He had seen it only indistinctly, in half light, and though he retained a general impression of dark hair and shadowy eyes, all details eluded him.

CHAPTER III

IN WHICH AMORY ARRIVES IN FREEPORT

AMORY had sent no word to Freeport of his intended arrival, for he very well knew that any hour he might choose to appear would find him welcome. At two the next day, he was traversing the wide, elm-shaded main street of the little town by the sea, the sole passenger in a ram-shackle taxi which awaited the arrival of the train at the sleepy station. There, no one had known him, for the station-master was new and the hour not one at which many people were abroad.

Reaching Journey's End, he dismissed the cheerful, slangy youth who guided the eccentric career of the broken-down Ford, and opened the gate upon the brick walk leading straight to the front entrance. Built in the days of the sea-trading Russells, the house was a fine example of colonial architecture, with a pillared porch ornamented by a beautiful fan-light window, the panes of which gleamed faintly purple. Beds of old-fashioned flowers bordered the walk.

Amory carried a latch-key. He had always kept it on his ring during every absence from home, and sometimes in the years just past he had singled it from the rest of the bunch to look at it for a moment. No matter how far he might wander, that bit of metal stood for home and all that home meant to him. The screen-door yielded to his touch, and with keen pleasure and anticipation he opened the finely-paneled door and entered the wide hall.

It stretched straight to the garden door at the back of the house, and that stood open, giving glimpses of blossoming shrubs, more beds of flowers, and at the foot of the lawn, the blue waters of the harbor. In that one brief pause, Amory saw a white-sailed yacht slipping across the space within his view.

More than once, in the dark watches of some night, on duty in a hospital ward, Amory had anticipated that moment and seen in his mind's eye, that peaceful, sunny scene. Now it seemed scarcely real. The house was absolutely still. After all, the only noise it ever knew was what he and Caroline made.

Where was Aunt Eunice? She might be sitting on the bricked terrace upon which the garden-door opened, and Amory walked softly down the long hall, only to find the terrace deserted. He looked into the east parlor and the west sitting-room,

with a growing sense of welcome as each room, unchanged in its calm order, greeted his eyes.

"Amory Russell, is it really thyself?" exclaimed a voice behind him, and Lydia came down the beautiful curving staircase.

"Really myself, Lydia," laughed Amory, seizing the old servant in both strong arms. "And thee has come just in time to stop my stealing thy cookies."

"Fie, Amory," said Lydia, kissing him affectionately. "Is thee the same mischievous boy as ever? Ah, but thee has grown in stature and in manliness. No, thee is not the same Amory."

"Just the same for the people who love me," said Amory with another hug. "Where is my Aunt Eunice?"

"Eunice Russell sleeps," said Lydia, smoothing her hair ruffled by his embrace. "Thee had better not waken her. Since Robert died, she has been frail and has need of more rest and of withdrawal from the tumult of the world. She will not sleep much longer. Has thee had any luncheon?"

"No, Lydia. I should have been here an hour ago, but the train was late."

"Go up to thy room, then, Amory, and tidy thyself. Thee will find all in readiness for thy homecoming. A dozen times a day Eunice Russell hath overlooked that room, lest something for thy com-

fort be omitted. By the time thee has washed from thee the dust of thy journey I will have luncheon prepared."

Lydia disappeared into the kitchen, and Amory, with a smile, turned to the stairs. The years were dropping from him like autumn leaves before the wind; he was only a boy again, sent up to wash his hands and tidy himself for supper.

The old grandfather clock stood on the landing of the curving stair, the silver moon on its face telling absolute falsehoods about the real moon's movements, but with its slow, solemn tick emphasizing the stillness of the great house. How many thousand times it had ticked since Amory last climbed those stairs!

From mere force of habit he stopped to look at the picture hanging beside the clock, a picture that had always held his fascinated attention. It was only an old painting of a full-rigged ship, all sails set and a fair wind blowing, a small ship, with a high free-board and a line of square ports set in a belt of white paint. Below ran the legend: "Ship *Iris*, Amory Russell, Master, leaving Shanghai for Freeport, July 10, 1801." More than a century after the ship *Iris* started on that voyage, the fourth Amory Russell spent long moments in contemplation of her painted image.

Amory's large room lay at the back of Journey's

End, overlooking the garden and a harbor full of dancing white-caps on this day of stiff west breeze. Its four windows all framed beautiful views, but it was to the room itself that Amory turned after his first glance at the sea. Yes, it was unchanged. The same fine India matting covered the floor, the same India drugget concealed the spot where he had upset the ink. What a lecture Lydia had read him upon his carelessness!

Spotless muslin draperies framed each tall window, their ruffles quivering in the soft air that drifted in. The four-posted mahogany bed was an expanse of snowy white, the big mahogany dresser and bureau still bore treasures dear to his boyhood, his desk had been freshly stocked with paper and blotters, the bookcase was as he had left it, crammed with favorite volumes. His glass-fronted case of curiosities was as before; the wide fireplace wore its summer dress of feathery asparagus, jeweled by bright red berries. The door into the dressing-room stood ajar and here a wealth of towels and soap surrounded the marble bath and basin, real marble this, no imitation porcelain.

His tennis racquet, his college photographs were all in place, his fencing foils and mask,—nothing, nothing was changed! Only, upon a white-draped table by the bed stood a big bowl of roses and beside them lay a Bible.

As compared with other young men, Amory's life had been blameless. A certain innate fastidiousness kept him from being tempted by the grosser forms of indulgence, yet he was not ignorant of evil. The peace of that house, of that room, fell upon him like a cleansing, healing bath. Over his desk hung a framed motto, which Amory knew by heart, though he had not thought of it for years. Long ago, Aunt Eunice placed it there, and he stopped to read it afresh.

“ ‘If the weak and the foolish bind thee,
I cannot unlock thy chain;
If sin and the senses blind thee,
Thyself must endure the pain.
If the arrows of conscience find thee,
Thou must conquer thy peace again.’ ”

That had been the key-note of his whole boyhood, of his whole training,—the absolute, utter responsibility of the individual for himself. It was the core of the Quaker belief, that all are equal in the sight of God, and none can mediate nor interpret for another. To each his own searchings of the soul, his own communion with the Spirit, his own quest for the Inner Light. And in such belief and such practice do men grow in grace.

Since Charles Russell had “married out of meeting,” his children were not Friends by birth. Caro-

line, indeed, had been brought up by her grandmother as an Episcopalian, but Amory, though he had never made profession of his Quaker faith, did believe strongly in this principle of personal responsibility. Self-reliance and self-control had been trained into him by Robert and Eunice Russell. He had grown up at Journey's End in an atmosphere of serene calm, in an order that seemed changeless, in a home that never knew an angry or an uplifted voice. Compassed about by such gracious peace, he had not been without experiences of it himself.

Having finished this survey of his room, Amory took a bath and changed his clothing completely. Nothing short of absolute bodily cleanliness fitted a return to Journey's End, and with a smile of amusement, he picked up the wet towels and restored order to the bathroom. More than once Lydia had sent him up to perform this duty, and he was not at all sure she would not do it again. No, in this house, he was surely not Dr. Russell, who had to his credit two years of successful work and before him a future which his superior officers seemed to consider brilliant,—he was only Amory, who was to wash his hands and make himself tidy.

He found the table laid on the brick terrace where the sunlight fell through pergola vines. Lydia waited on him with affectionate solicitude,

enjoying the little old familiar jokes and allusions, and also his unaffected appetite for her delicious home cooking. Just as he finished the clock struck three.

"If thee wishes, Amory," suggested Lydia, "thee may go up-stairs and sit by Eunice Russell until she wakes. To open her eyes upon thy face will be for her a joyful moment."

The door into the big front chamber moved noiselessly as Amory entered. Side by side stood the twin mahogany beds with their carved posts and netted testers. Across the foot of the farther one was drawn a bamboo couch, and there Amory found his aunt, wrapped yet in quiet slumber. Very softly he drew a low stool to her side and seated himself, looking earnestly into the peaceful face of the sleeper.

Eunice Russell had never worn the white cap of the older Friends; her soft waving hair was merely parted and drawn back on either side of a face, which, naturally pleasing in contour, had gained ineffable charm from the beauty of Eunice's inner life.

The tears came to Amory's eyes as he realized that the years had left their traces upon even that serene countenance. The soft hair had whitened, and there was about the whole slight figure an air of fragility which went to Amory's heart and some-

what alarmed him as a physician. His Aunt Eunice was very dear to Amory.

Still she did not wake, and he sat in silence, his mind busy with many memories. For the first time there came home to him a full realization of what it had been to her to lose her husband, and an appreciation of the loss to him personally. He was on the ocean when Uncle Robert died, and the news did not reach him for many weeks. He had loved his uncle, but at the time, the shock was dulled for him by the strenuous work in which he was engulfed. He literally had no time for grief.

Aunt Eunice's orderly big room, too, was unchanged; unaltered its fine old furniture and beautiful proportions. The wing-chair yet stood by the side window, where a well-worn Bible lay upon the white-draped table. Through half-closed inner shutters subdued light fell, and sweet odors crept from the climbing honeysuckle over the front porch. Somehow it seemed as though Uncle Robert must shortly enter.

He had been a tall man, though never heavy, with a finely-shaped head, thick white hair, and a benevolent face, a man whose word was as good as a written agreement, whose kindly heart never judged severely his fellow-beings. Yet he was a man who dealt sternly with himself and who could not brook dishonesty in others.

Through Amory's mind flitted recollections of the stories Uncle Robert used to tell him. Journey's End was full of curiosities, beautiful rare things from India and China, trophies of many a past sea voyage, by many a vanished Russell. Every one had a story, and as a child, Amory never tired of hearing about them. It was a regular part of every winter evening, when his lessons were learned, that he should choose some new object of which to hear the story. His mind had been a wonderful jumble of old Cathay and pirate ships, of temples and heathen people in distant lands. There was only one ornament in the house of which Uncle Robert never told him the story, and that was the carved ivory dragon occupying the mantel of the east parlor. For some reason his uncle was persistently silent concerning that dragon, and after one or two attempts to learn where it came from, Amory had taken the hint and permitted it to remain in oblivion.

Robert Russell had loved his brilliant, wayward younger brother with an affection that had in it something of the paternal. Charles's wildest escapades never really exhausted the patience of the grave, dignified Robert, and it was inevitable that he should love Charles's son. Having lost two children in early infancy, both he and Eunice looked upon Amory as compensation for early sorrow.

And as Amory grew older, there sprang up between him and his Uncle Robert an affectionate comprehension that worked for true companionship, a mutual understanding that wrought good on both sides. Amory had never openly disobeyed his Uncle Robert; he was not a man whom a boy did disobey, but his obedience was not that of fear. His uncle thoroughly understood Amory, and, though firm, was invariably gentle. Amory grew to young manhood trusting and respecting his uncle and taking very seriously any reproof from him.

During his sophomore year at college he incurred one which he never forgot. Due to a series of thoughtless imprudences, he found himself involved in debt and in increasing difficulties. After considerable thought, he confessed his predicament in a letter to his uncle.

That letter gave Robert Russell keen distress, for he had watched so anxiously for any tendencies of Charles to crop out in Charles's son, tried so conscientiously to direct Amory in paths of prudence. He answered the letter in person, took one keen look at his nephew, and then, without a change in his usual kindly, grave manner, asked to see the bills. Having examined them, absolutely without comment, he drew his check-book from his pocket and made out a check for the exact amount involved.

"I should like thee to send me those receipted bills, Amory," he said quietly as he passed the check across the table, and then, seeing the mortification and shame written on the sensitive young face before him, he relented. "Perhaps thee does not deserve that, Amory," he added. "Thee may let thy own conscience judge thee. Send the receipts or not, as it decrees. And if thee is truly penitent, thee will keep within thy allowance for the coming term."

Amory had not exceeded the allotted sum, indeed, a very liberal amount, and he had disciplined himself by sending the receipted bills to his uncle.

He remembered, too, Uncle Robert's great generosity in financial matters. Every quarter, acting as trustee of his brother's estate, Robert sent to Mrs. Payne the proper dividends for Caroline's expenses and education, and at her marriage had rendered her share of her father's property, with accounts and vouchers accurate to a cent.

But on Amory's twenty-first birthday, the family lawyer presented him with a statement of the moneys due him from his inheritance, a sum, to Amory's astonishment, greatly increased since his father's death by Robert's careful management, and without a single charge against it, neither for maintenance, nor for clothing,—not even for education.

"Thee has been my son, Amory, in everything

except actual paternity," was Robert's sole comment to his surprised certainty of a mistake. "I trust thee will not begrudge me a father's privilege."

Aunt Eunice was waking. The fine white kerchief crossed upon her bosom rose and fell with less regularity, her lids lifted and for a second she lay staring in blank incredulity into Amory's eyes.

"Is it thee, Amory?" she gasped at last.

Amory slid to his knees beside the couch, put both arms about the slight figure and laid his cheek against hers. Out on the stairs the tall clock ticked moment after moment into eternity while neither moved nor spoke.

CHAPTER IV

IN WHICH AMORY MEETS TWO GIRLS AND RESCUES A LADY FROM PERIL

“I SHOULD tell thee, Amory,” said Mrs. Russell, as her nephew bade her good-night, “that to-morrow, being First Day, Friends will meet here. What with the high price of coal and the lessening number at meeting and the emergencies of the war, we have not tried to heat the meeting-house for over two years. And now, though the weather would permit its use, the custom continues that the few of us who are left should gather at Journey’s End. Thee will understand that I would be wiser not to break my custom of remaining in my room until the hour for meeting? I am unpleasantly reminded in these days that I cannot endure so much fatigue as in the past.”

“And I have talked to thee all the afternoon and evening of such distracting and exciting things, Aunt Eunice,” said Amory, as they stood under the shaded light in the upper hall. “I have jerked thee from one end of Paris to the other, and told thee a hundred different tales that may distress thee. Why did thee not bid me hold my tongue?”

"Thee can tell me nothing that I do not care to hear and thee has not disturbed me in the least. The joy of thy arrival has added greatly to my peace. My rest will be untroubled and I trust that thine may be the same. Sleep as late as thee likes, Amory. Whenever thee is ready, Lydia will give thee breakfast. Friends will meet at half-past ten."

She kissed him and went to her room, while Amory turned down-stairs and into the garden. He wanted to smoke, but didn't like to do so, even in his own room, until he knew that it would not distress his aunt.

"Will thee fasten the garden door when thee comes in?" asked Lydia, on her way to bed.

"I will," said Amory. "And thee need leave no light for me, Lydia. The moon is enough."

Amory went out into the lovely old-fashioned garden, down to the sea-wall, at the base of which lay a shingly beach, now bared by the low tide. The lawn and garden of Journey's End covered an area as large as two ordinary lots, but deeper than wide. To the north, cut off by a ten-foot brick wall, another big colonial house stood in corresponding grounds. It had long been occupied by the Fiskes, but in Amory's boyhood only Admiral and Mrs. Fiske were left after the marriage of their children, to make what use they could of the

tremendous old place. The house looked open, for several windows showed lights and the sound of lively music floated through the quiet air.

"It seems to me Aunt Eunice wrote that the Fiske place was sold," thought Amory. "I must ask her about it in the morning."

He finished his cigarette by the sea-wall and then realized that he was both tired and sleepy. Perhaps it would be better to go to bed. He wished that Caroline had come with him; she looked anything but well or happy. Carol was right about Journey's End; there *was* something about the old place different from others, something that enveloped one in an atmosphere of its own. It was not wholly because it was home, for it had not been that to Caroline, and yet she had realized the difference.

The snorting of a motor-car before the next house distracted the current of Amory's thoughts, gay young voices called back and forth for a moment, and then the car rolled away, while some one entered the Fiske house and banged the door. Amory went into Journey's End and up to his room.

He slept as only one can sleep who comes back to the place in the world given him to love above all others, the place that is home to him, to the dear familiar things of life, the accustomed surroundings of every-day existence. Yet it was not late when he rose, and only half-past nine when he had

breakfasted upon the terrace and again sauntered into the garden.

“Will thee attend meeting, Amory?” asked Lydia, coming to the garden door.

“Certainly. Where will it be,—in the east parlor?”

“The west sitting-room,” said Lydia.

“The other room is larger,” observed Amory, drawing his cigarette case from his pocket and deliberately watching for its effect upon Lydia.

“That is true,” Lydia agreed, “but since Robert died, Eunice seldom uses the east parlor. She seems to have taken a dislike to it. I have noted that she never sits there for more than a few moments at a time. Amory Russell, thee has too fine a mouth to disfigure with that cigarette!”

“How does thee know what it is?” asked Amory mischievously.

“I am not ignorant of the evil customs of the world, though I have lived in Journey’s End for forty years,” replied Lydia with as much of a sniff as her principles permitted. “Well, if thee does nothing worse than smoke, I suppose both Journey’s End and I can endure and survive.”

“Tell me, Lydia,” said Amory coaxingly, “will it shock Aunt Eunice?”

“It will shock her much more to have thee conceal it from her. No, if thee must smoke, Amory,

do it openly. Eunice Russell does not judge others harshly, least of all thyself. Times have changed, and those who are past all desire for change themselves do not always yearn to cramp the younger lives about them. Thy happiness is Eunice's first earthly concern, and if a roll of tobacco and a match are essential to it, she will make allowances for thy weakness."

Amory laughed outright. "Lydia, Lydia, I have known thee in past years to make allowances thyself for my shortcomings,—indeed, to connive at concealing them. In the bottom of thy heart, thee is not only tolerating this cigarette, but enjoying its odor!"

"If thee is going into the garden, Amory, thee may as well make thyself useful by cutting some roses," said Lydia, grimly enough, but with a smile curving her lips as she turned to fetch him the basket and shears.

"The garden does not look so well as Eunice wishes," she added. "John Duane still toils in it, but he needs direction, and Eunice has not felt strong to work as she used to do. And now it seems that every season brings a fresh pest in the form of a new bug or worm. We feel quite an affection for the old-fashioned tent-caterpillars."

"Thee doesn't think Aunt Eunice is ill, does thee, Lydia? She is thin and fragile and I do not like

her transparent look. Of course, she has not recovered from the shock of Uncle Robert's death, but does thee think anything is wrong?"

"Eunice Russell is not ill, but anxiety for thee has somewhat affected her strength, and there are times when it seems as though the unrest of the world has penetrated even the walls of Journey's End. It is difficult to rise above the disorder and to keep a serene mind. Last week when I was cleaning the east parlor it seemed as though an evil spirit had entered into me. But I recalled that I had godly parents and a spiritual upbringing, and I concluded that it must be the weather."

Amory smiled again as he strolled down the central brick walk. The roses were in their prime, and on either side bent inviting, fragrant heads for his choice. They were all old favorites, Jacqueline, George Washington, Seven Sisters, cinnamon, and tiny yellow single Scotch ones, with here and there a sweetbriar.

With real enjoyment Amory made his selection and filled his basket and then wandered around, examining the flowers with care. The garden had been a great pleasure to both his uncle and aunt, and was still well-kept and trim.

Down the length of the high wall dividing the grounds from those of the Fiske place ran a long, straight path, bordered by lilacs and other tall,

flowering shrubs. The lilacs were past now, but the Japanese cherries and crabs were in full beauty, and Amory, catching a glimpse of their pink blossoms from the central walk, turned the corner for a nearer view. He was startled to come suddenly upon a girl.

She stood looking at a rose-breasted grosbeak singing on the flowering thorn-tree. She was dressed in white and her head, crowned with heavy blue-black hair, was tilted upward, showing the long line of her slender young throat. In one hand she clasped a gardening instrument known to Amory's youth as a "clawer"; the other held a rose.

At this unexpected apparition, Amory stepped back and at the same instant the girl looked at him.

It was a curious look, steady and rather as though she were questioning him. Her eyes, as he saw at once, were suited to her hair, in color uncertain, but dusky with smouldering lights.

"Don't step on those baby larks," she ordered imperiously.

Amory turned on the flat heel of his canvas shoe, looking behind him, under the impression that he had inadvertently trod on a bird's nest. Nothing showed but some small green plants.

"The baby *what?* " he asked, bewildered.

"The little larkspurs," said the girl less impetuously. "They have just been transplanted."

"Oh," said Amory. "I thought they were weeds."

"Weeds don't grow in rows," said his companion, giving him another searching glance. "All these things down here are seedlings. These are pansies, and these are phlox and that is cosmos. That cosmos ought to be transplanted. Yes, and these are marigolds. That, by the way," she added with a wave of the clawer and with a charming impudence, "is a lilac."

"Yes," said Amory. "I am acquainted with the lilacs. When I was a naughty little boy, my aunt used to send me to get a switch from one of them."

The girl laughed, her face lighting up in the most engaging manner. "That dear Quaker saint?" she asked. "Yes, if she thought it was her duty, she would do it, no matter how she hated it."

"Aunt Eunice never let her affection for me interfere with her sense of duty," agreed Amory, smiling.

"She is the sweetest thing that walks this earth," said the girl thoughtfully. "Then you must be Dr. Russell?"

"Yes," said Amory courteously. "And I suppose I ought to know you, but in the years I have

been away the Freeport girls have grown past recognition."

"No," said his companion, "you have no reason to know me. I'm merely nurse-maid to this bed of seedlings. Good-morning," she added, and started to pass him on the walk.

"Won't you let me share these roses?" asked Amory, indicating the basket he had placed on the stone seat at the corner of the lilac path. It had once graced the garden of some old Italian villa. On either end sat straight a formal little lion.

"Thank you," said the girl, hesitating slightly. "I will take three or four. No, I want only red ones.

"That dear aunt of yours," she added as Amory dropped the pink flowers, "is an angel let loose from heaven. I wonder ——"

"Wonder what?" asked Amory, selecting a handful of Jacks. He was entirely unaware of the sympathetic tone that had crept into his voice.

"If you —— No, of course it is impossible. Nothing, Dr. Russell. Pardon my intrusion into the garden. I did not know you were at home."

"It is no intrusion from a friend of Aunt Eunice," Amory began, but the girl had reached the sea-wall. On the top step she turned abruptly and an expression of absolute impishness lighted her dark face. She looked the very incarnation of mis-

chief as she stood with slender, boyish figure silhouetted in white against the blue harbor.

"When Aunt Eunice sees that cigarette," she remarked, indicating the one Amory still held in his fingers, "she may send you for another switch," and vanished with her words.

Amory stared for a second and then, laughing heartily, approached the sea-wall. The beach below lay empty in either direction.

"Where did she go?" he thought. "What a picture she made! And who can she be? There was surely something familiar about her face, and yet she said I did not know her. Could I have run across her in France? She might have been doing Red Cross work."

Amory pondered this problem, oblivious of passing time, till Lydia came to where he stood by the sun-dial.

"It is after ten, Amory. Give me the roses that I may put them in place."

As Amory entered the hall, Mrs. Russell was just coming down. Stopping on the last stair, she waited for him to come to her, and, placing a hand on either shoulder, kissed him twice.

"I hope thee has rested well, Amory, and that home seems sweet to thee. Sarah and Henry Swain are this moment coming up the walk. Will thee stay with me here in the hall and greet the Friends

as they come? Thee looks cool and comfortable," she added with a glance at the spotless flannels her nephew had thought appropriate to the summer day.

For fifteen minutes Amory stood in the hall greeting one acquaintance after another,—Friends in orthodox Quaker costume, others in ordinary dress, their heritage indicated by serene faces and calm manners. The unaffected pleasure at seeing him again, the cordial hand-clasps, the gentle comments touched Amory rather deeply. "I am glad to see thee, Amory." "This is a joyful day for thy Aunt Eunice." "Thee does not know how thankful we are to see thee return in safety,"—one after another came the words of welcome, as each passed into the sitting-room.

"We will go in now, Amory," said his aunt when some twenty people had assembled. "No more may come and the clock is at the moment."

Amory glanced into the room, saw that there was no division of men and women, as was the case in the meeting-house, and looked for the opportunity to sit beside his aunt. But as he followed her he saw that there would be no chance for this. Eunice Russell seated herself by Hannah Ames. The only seats now unoccupied were beyond the big fireplace which jutted into the room so far as to form deep recesses on either side, where long French

windows opened upon the terrace. Amory crossed to a low tapestry-covered sofa, its back against the side of this recess. Nearest sat Sarah Swain at the corner of the fireplace, but since she faced the room, Amory was almost directly behind her.

Deep silence fell upon the group. They sat in relaxed attitudes, some with eyes closed, the rest with gaze bent on the floor. Amory, too, though his seat commanded an entrancing view of the garden, folded his arms and directed his gaze to the Persian rug at his feet.

Five minutes passed and the silence that seemed almost tangible was broken by a slight rustle, a sound of subdued steps. Two slender feet clad in white canvas shoes passed across the rug under Amory's eyes, a white dress swept by and some one took the only vacant chair in the room, directly opposite Amory's sofa and only four feet away.

The appearance of those shoes surprised Amory for a moment, though he well knew the daughters, and more especially the granddaughters of the Quaker homes of Freeport, to be far from orthodox in dress. But the saucy white shoes fitted trim feet and strikingly resembled those worn by the girl lately encountered in the garden. He deliberately raised his eyes.

No, this was not the young person who had

ordered him off the baby larks, and yet there was something familiar in this face, too, with its brown hair under a shady hat, around which twisted a blue scarf.

“What ails me?” Amory asked himself. “I seem to know every girl I meet. Is it just because it is so pleasant to see American girls again?”

His opposite neighbor glanced at him in her turn and for a second Amory looked into a pair of placid blue eyes, very unlike the dark, stormy ones of the garden visitor, but it was only for a second, and both were again looking at the rug.

Outside, the clock on the stairs ticked rhythmically, steadily, and inside the west sitting-room absolute silence reigned, broken only by an occasional sigh, or the soft shifting of some one’s foot. The very atmosphere was filled with prayer so intense and concentrated that one almost heard the beating of angel wings. Would the Spirit move any one to speak?

Eleven long slow strokes from the grandfather clock and the silence yet unbroken. A sudden movement of the white shoes opposite caught Amory’s attention and he glanced up. This time the blue eyes met his squarely and there was in them a look of combined amusement and consternation. The girl made a slight gesture.

Following its direction, Amory turned his head

and into his own eyes flashed the laughter that never lay far below the surface of his sunny nature. There sat Sarah Swain, hands clasped in her lap, head reverently bent, and upon the edge of Sarah Swain's demure Quaker bonnet, just where its stiff edge revealed her neck, promenaded a two-inch caterpillar. Even as Amory looked, it rose on its rear legs, waving its head from side to side, directly over Sarah's unprotected skin!

For one second Amory experienced a sinful desire to stay his hand, to permit that caterpillar to continue its career unchecked; even speculated as to the result on Sarah Swain and upon the assembled meeting. Had he been sixteen instead of twenty-six, it is to be feared he would have allowed events to take their course.

With a single motion he swept that caterpillar from its silken path, so deftly that unsuspecting Sarah Swain never moved her devout head. Very quietly he rose to his feet, took three steps to the long window and threw the insect outside. Then, dusting his hands with his handkerchief, Amory sat down, but not without another glance at his neighbor. The blue eyes were bent demurely on the rug. No one else in the room moved or seemed to notice.

Again the clock ticked its slow story while Amory endeavored to recapture the mood that had been

his before the interruption. This time he sat looking into the garden.

There was a slight stir. Sarah Swain with great deliberation untied her bonnet and handed it to Hannah Ames. Then she rose, her head in its cap of transparent muslin reverently bowed.

At first her words came falteringly, a prayer full of poetical phrases and allusions, words familiar from much searching of the Scriptures and long hours of inward meditation. Her sweet, quavering old voice fell softly on the ears of her silent listeners, perhaps on none more pleasantly than those of the young man behind her. And when she spoke of him, not by name, but as the son of the house returned in safety from a far country, Amory's eyes came back from the garden to the rug.

Another period of silence followed Sarah's prayer. Then Henry Swain turned to Hannah Ames and offered her his hand. First Day meeting was at an end.

In the little stir and hum of conversation that followed, Amory rose and looked at the girl opposite. Her eyes met his with a friendly smile.

"You do not remember me, Amory Russell?" she asked, extending her hand. "Have you forgotten one winter day long ago, when some children were sliding on Long Pond and you took a little girl on your sled, and then steered into a big frozen snow-

ball and smashed the sled and spilled the riders to either end of the pond?"

"Why, it is Phebe Ames!" exclaimed Amory, grasping the outstretched hand. "Indeed, I have not forgotten that disaster. We arose with bleeding noses and bumped heads and not at all pleased with each other."

"We were not," Phebe agreed laughingly. "It is no wonder you did not know me, Amory, for I have not often visited Grandmother when you were at home. I came from Providence only yesterday to stay with her for a time and I have already shocked her by being tardy for meeting."

"Phebe, how does thee do?" asked Eunice Russell, coming up with an affectionate greeting. "Thee has spoken with Amory? I was not sure you would recall each other. And is thee in Freeport for the summer?"

"For as long as Grandmother can tolerate me," said the smiling Phebe. "She wanted me to come earlier, but I was delayed because I promised to help with a Venetian entertainment our church was giving. Just as soon as it was over, I came flying to Freeport. Please pardon me, Mrs. Russell, for being late this morning."

Amory gave the girl a keen look. She came from Providence; she had been at the carnival. Allowing for evening dress and for the very subdued

lights of the booth,—yes, this *must* be the same girl. Yet her companion had called her Eve. Well, Eve and Phebe were not dissimilar in sound; his ears might have betrayed him.

“And that caterpillar,” said Phebe, turning again to Amory as Mrs. Russell’s attention was claimed by Mary Barton. “It is wrong of me, but I was *so* tempted not to attract your attention and to see what would happen if we let it alone.”

“You were not alone in temptation,” replied Amory.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH AMORY HEARS A STORY AND MAKES AN IMPORTANT DECISION

“ **A**ND now tell me of Caroline,” said Mrs. Russell after tea on First Day, as she seated herself on the brick terrace to watch the shadows lengthen through the garden and over the harbor. “ I am so glad thee could have that little visit with her. I have not seen Caroline since Robert died. She came to me then, and was sweet and daughterly, but I did not feel at ease concerning her. She appeared sad, or perhaps not exactly sad, but not at peace with herself.”

“ She was thin and looked tired,” replied Amory, who was leaning against one of the pillars of the stately porch. “ She was also deep in engagements of various kinds.”

“ Her life seems to me ill-planned. She is young and I believe that the young should be joyous, but Caroline is old enough to have found out where true happiness lies. I wish I felt that Jermain is

the man who will develop her character to its fullest possibilities."

Amory, looking into the garden, smiled to himself, partly at his knowledge of Carol's environment, partly at his aunt's sweet unworldliness. In his experience, the present generation concerned itself very little with the development of character!

"Caroline has lived in such different surroundings," went on his aunt, "that she and I do not look at things from the same view-point. And it is a constant struggle for any of us to keep the small things of life small and the large things large. Whenever Caroline came to Journey's End, I tried to do my duty by her, but I have taken myself to task that I did not love her as I loved thee.

"I have sometimes thought," she continued, "that Caroline yet resents a chastisement that I once administered during her childhood. I admit that it was given in haste and even in anger. I found her heaping coals from the fire upon a rug in the east parlor, because she had read a fairy-tale of a wizard who, in that manner, constructed a magic camel out of a hearth-rug. I was so horrified at what she had done; at the danger to herself; and over how easily she might have destroyed the house, that I took Caroline to my room and spanked her with my ivory-backed hair-brush. Does thee think she can still resent it?"

Amory turned a laughing face to his aunt. "Caroline spoke most lovingly of thee, Aunt Eunice. Resent it?—I am sure she does not."

"At the time, I accused myself with being more concerned over the damage to a valuable rug and with the peril in which she had placed her own life as well as Journey's End, than with the pernicious effects upon her mind of the tale she had read. I experienced severe qualms of conscience."

Amory sat down upon the terrace steps and laid his head on his aunt's knee, his eyes brimming with laughter.

"And has thee experienced no qualms for the times thee chastised me?"

"Thee needn't try to tease me, Amory. Thee knows there is no bitterness in thy heart concerning any discipline thee received at my hands. Thee was never punished except when thee richly deserved it and never in haste and never in anger. But I spanked Caroline without stopping for reflection and without considering her home-training and her nature. It is true that when I confessed my error to Robert, he remarked that he wished I had done it before and he hoped I would do it again. And I recall that during the rest of her visit that summer, Caroline was more mannerly and more obedient than usual. Amory, thee is deranging my

kerchief. Thee reminds me of the way Elizabeth flies at me with a sudden kiss."

"Who is Elizabeth, and what right has she to hug my Aunt Eunice?" demanded Amory.

"Elizabeth Emerson, who lives next door. When Admiral Fiske died, the place was purchased by John Emerson of New York. Elizabeth is one of his daughters. There are two older girls, Dorothy and Marion, and then comes Elizabeth, who is twenty-two, and William, who is fourteen. I have merely met the parents and the older girls, but in one way and another, I have seen a good deal of Elizabeth, who interests me greatly. She has been away on a visit and I do not think she can yet be at home or she would surely be running in. She often helps me with my flowers and comes and goes as she likes in the garden."

"How does she look?" asked Amory. "This morning when I was cutting roses, I encountered a young girl in the lilac walk, and for a moment she made me feel as though I were the stranger, not she."

"It must have been Elizabeth. I did not know she had returned. She is tall and slender, and very quick in her motions. Her hair is black, with curious bluish shadows, and she has dark eyes and a smooth brown skin."

"Then it was Elizabeth all right enough. She

ordered me not to step on some seedlings, and when I asked her name would not tell it, and when I offered her roses, chose red ones. She informed me that my dear Aunt Eunice was an angel astray from heaven, and when she took leave of me, her face wore a positively heathenish expression."

"That is Elizabeth," sighed his aunt. "The child has many moods and some of them are strange. Elizabeth runs over to show me her dainty frocks and pretty slippers, and I enjoy seeing them and hearing of her parties and good times. And yet she often uses most peculiar language and her manner lacks the distinctive repose which characterizes a lady. The present generation of young girls astonishes me, and yet I cannot help loving their grace and youth. I have grown fond of Elizabeth, though I do not wholly approve of her. She is sweet at heart and has in her the making of a noble woman, but her home environment and her companions are not what I could wish for a girl of such temperament. I try to be tolerant toward this changing world but there are times when I find it difficult to reconcile my conscience to the effort necessary. Let me tell thee of an experience which I had with Elizabeth and see whether thee thinks me illiberal in my dealings with her.

"She came to me one day," Mrs. Russell went

on, "straight from a motor-ride and dance, and it was borne in upon me that I owed a duty to Elizabeth. Her dress was composed of a scant three yards of material,—there could not have been more. It was immodest and even its color was not respectable. Laugh if thee likes,—I do not mind, but it will do thee no harm to hear this tale of Elizabeth.

" She had in her ears pendants two inches long, and her face was both powdered and painted. Her hat—her hat, Amory, was *sinful*. It was a wicked little hat. All this was bad enough, but when she kissed me, as she did at once, her lips were sullied with tobacco."

Amory, his face buried in his aunt's lap, tried to keep his shoulders from shaking.

" It came to me that I must do my duty by Elizabeth. I told her to take off that hat, and she did so and threw it from the terrace. I told her to sit down and to turn her face from me, for I would not look upon it. She obeyed. Then I spoke the words that were given me to utter. I told her that her dress was worse than she could know; I told her that it was improper both in cut and color, and that it would make any well-brought-up youth, like my Amory, believe her what she was not. I told her what I thought of her hat and of her stockings, and that her ears were too dainty to disfigure with those

great pendants. Elizabeth tore them off and threw them after the hat."

"Elizabeth has certainly known her moments with the lilac switches," murmured Amory, lifting a laughing face from its refuge.

"What did thee say, dear? I did not understand thy allusion?"

"Thee would not, Aunt Eunice. Go on with thy story. I find it interesting."

"I told Elizabeth that I would as soon see paint upon the Resurrection lilies as on her face, and that the lips of a young girl should be pure. Then I was silent, for I had said what was given me to speak. Elizabeth was silent, too, for a time, and then she rose, still without a word, and went down the steps. She took her ear-rings and the bad little hat. From it fell a pin, which, when I picked it up later, was no better than it should be. And she went out of the garden without speaking and without looking back. I was sorry, for I knew from the droop of her head that she was going to have an unpleasant time if she listened to her conscience."

"Don't stop," begged Amory, as his aunt relapsed into silence. "I know there is more to come."

"There is. I was grieved, too, for I cared for Elizabeth and feared that she might never return, and yet I could not find it in my heart to regret one

word I had spoken. I had her much in my devotions that night and much in my meditation the next day.

"I did not see her for twenty-four hours, but in the evening when I sat here as I usually do, to watch the sunset colors over the harbor and to think of my boy, I saw Elizabeth coming from the beach and through the garden as she usually chooses to come. And even at a distance, I knew that Elizabeth had held communion with her better self. She wore a corn-colored frock that was both charming and modest; she had arranged her hair in a maidenly fashion, and she had washed the paint and powder from her face and discarded her barbaric jewels. She came to me like a penitent child, and put her head in my lap as thee is doing, Amory. And presently she told me that she was not going to paint her face any more and that she had done with cigarettes."

"And what became of the bad little hat?" asked Amory, his voice full of laughter.

"I saw that hat but once again and then at headquarters where I was helping pack clothing for the French relief. I did not understand why Elizabeth chose to send it there, and when I asked, she said that it might be too rapid for Freeport, but she did not think it could corrupt Paris."

"Aunt Eunice, thee is too sweet for words!" laughed Amory. "And I suspect thee of a diplomatic ruse. Is thee not using the naughty Elizabeth as a figurative rod for me?"

"That is not in my thought, Amory. When I embraced thee this morning I knew thee had been smoking, but it did not distress nor concern me. Thee is a man and can judge for thyself. Thee is a physician and knows whether it will harm thee. And thee need not retire to the garden unless thee chooses. I can trust thee not to smoke in any room where it will be displeasing either to Lydia or to me. I would not place a barrier in any path thy conscience permits thee to follow. I try to be liberal and to make full allowance for changing times and for younger people, but try as I may, I can never willingly tolerate a cigarette in a girl's mouth.

"But I have had searchings of heart concerning my own bonnet," she went on. "While I have never worn the orthodox Quaker dress, I have preferred plain garb and a close bonnet with a white quilling about my face. Time was when a Freeport milliner would put in a fresh quilling for seventy-five cents, but the price increased, for it is no easy task to arrange that quilling with success.

"Finally the Freeport milliner died and when the bonnets needed fresh quilling they had to be

sent to Boston. There was no one here who knew how to do it. And what with the express each way and the careful packing required, and the increase in price of materials and the fussiness of the work, it now costs five dollars each time that quilling is renewed. And I do like to be dainty. Thee is laughing again, Amory, and now at my bonnet! But I am seriously considering whether a more worldly form of head-gear may not in my case prove less worldly in the end."

"Oh, no, Aunt Eunice," Amory protested quickly. "Keep thy little bonnet that I love. No matter if it costs ten dollars instead of five and needs fresh silk each week. Don't change it."

"Then I will not, Amory; but, dear, thee is almost as lax in thy language as my impetuous Elizabeth, and she did not have thy early training. Thee may love a person and feel affection for an animal, but thee merely likes an article of dress."

"*That* little bonnet I love and I love the lady in it," persisted Amory, smiling at the reproof. During the short time he had been at Journey's End he had very carefully edited his vocabulary.

"As thee likes, dear, but it is not correct English. It pleases me that thee addresses me with the speech of thy boyhood. I feared that after so long a sojourn among strangers, it would not return readily to thy lips."

"The plain language is natural to me in Journey's End, Aunt Eunice, and I shall always use it with thee. And now tell me, thee did not keep the motor car after Uncle Robert died?"

"I did not. John Howland, who has helped me with many knotty legal points—I could never have wrestled with my income taxes but for him—advised me to sell the car. He said thee would be absent long and that when thee did return, thee would prefer a later model. I should use it too seldom to pay for keeping it and a chauffeur often idle. When I have wished a car, it has been easy to telephone to Benjamin Holden's garage. Young Benjamin comes with a comfortable closed machine and always drives me himself. And Elizabeth is ever coaxing me into her car. She drives carefully and never exceeds the speed I best enjoy, though she did once tell me that her friends fainted in rows to see her pass at so slow a pace."

"Bully for Elizabeth!" said Amory. "I recall now that thee has spoken of her by name in thy letters, and of her friendship with thee, but she had never seemed a real person to me. Thee must tell her not to keep out of the garden merely because I am here. It is big enough for us both without danger of our getting in each other's way. And to-morrow, I will see about ordering a car. I think a coupé will be best. Thee can have as much or as

little air as thee likes, and it will hold three or four people comfortably if necessary."

"I shall like that, and a small car of that type will perhaps be equally convenient for thee if thee decides to go into practice in Freeport. Caroline wrote me that she thought New York would offer thy best opportunity. Greatly as I should enjoy having thee here, Amory, I have lived without thee for long periods at a time, and thee must not let thy consideration for me keep thee from a more desirable opening. It is much to have an ocean no longer between us. Were thee in New York, thee could come to me quickly in case of need."

"It is hard to know what is best to do, Aunt Eunice. There are reasons why I'd like to stay in Freeport, but before I fully decide I want to run down to Johns Hopkins and talk with some of the staff. If I should conclude to practise here, how about my office? Does thee know of any suite in a business block?"

"Why should thee not have it in Journey's End?" asked his aunt, and the wistful note in her voice did not escape Amory's observant ear. "Here are twenty-one rooms."

"Would it not trouble thee to have strangers coming and going, and some unavoidable confusion?"

"Nothing needful for thy work could be an an-

noyance. I had thought thee might take the east front room for thy patients. The room behind could be thy office, with yet the little den behind that—thy uncle's special sitting-room. That would give thee a suite of three apartments, and should thee need more, I have no liking for the east parlor. Thee may use that also."

"Whew!" whistled Amory. "Three rooms is as much as even the top sawbones of the profession really needs. I wasn't expecting to start with more than two."

"Thee may have four if thee wishes. And thee knows there is already a stationary wash-stand in thy uncle's study. Any other plumbing could be easily installed."

"Thee is very thoughtful, Aunt Eunice, and very generous," began her nephew.

"I may have taken thought for thee, but do not call me generous. Journey's End is thy home, Amory; it is at thy disposal. It will be thine when I join Robert."

"But there will be other difficulties," said Amory after a time. "A doctor in the house involves constant attention to the telephone and door-bell,—that is, if he is the successful chap I hope to be."

"Thee will be successful; it is written in thy face. And there is a real opening for a physician in Freeport. In my quiet way I have made in-

quiries and in a town of eight thousand, there are but two really reputable practitioners. There is plenty of work for another. And in summer, thee knows, Freeport becomes quite a resort and its population nearly doubles. Extra servants will be needed. I have already an excellent negro woman who comes to assist Lydia except on First Day, for Lydia is no longer young and the house is large. I had thought of engaging a maid for thy special service, to answer bells and to take messages and to be generally useful to thee. She would need to be a superior person, for such duties demand intelligence, but if a sufficient wage is offered, she could be found. Or perhaps thee would prefer a nurse as thy assistant. I recall that when I visited Dr. Camp in Boston, he had a trim young woman in uniform who was most helpful to me in rearranging my dress."

"And what took thee to a doctor's office?" demanded her nephew immediately. "Thee wrote me nothing of that."

"There! my unlucky tongue has run away with me," sighed Mrs. Russell. "I was speaking of the courteous young woman —"

"Hang the courteous young woman! Aunt Eunice, about what did thee consult Dr. Camp? Come! I have a right to know."

"Thee has the right and I intended thee to know,

only not just yet. I did not want to hamper thy plans in any way nor to make thee feel—dear, I seem to be blundering more than ever! Do not be disturbed, Amory, and do not loosen thy embrace. I want to be very close to thee.

“It is only this foolish heart of mine,” she added after a moment. “There is something wrong with its valves. Last Eleventh month I went to Dr. Camp and again this past Fifth month. The trouble has not increased during that time, and with rest and care it may grow no worse.”

“Why *didn't* thee tell me?” asked Amory after a long pause. “Why *didn't* thee?”

“Because I knew thee would come home at once and that thy work was important. Moreover thee was coming anyway this month. The danger is not immediate, dear boy. I have not told Lydia; I feared her anxiety would react upon me. No one in Freeport knows except John Howland. Him I told, for I wished to set my affairs in order. John has been most kind to me, Amory. He ascertained that Dr. Camp was considered the best heart specialist in Boston; he went first and arranged an appointment for me, and on both my visits insisted upon personally escorting me. He has shown me thoughtful attention and we have disagreed but on one point,—he wished to send thee word. I was obliged to ask his promise that he would not do so

without my permission. And now thee is here, and I am no worse, and my judgment is justified."

" Except that I might have been with thee these six months past," said Amory, after a struggle to control his voice. " To-morrow, will thee let me examine thy heart?"

" Indeed thee may. I shall feel honored to be Dr. Russell's first Freeport patient. Come, dear Amory, let us dry our eyes and smile again. Dr. Camp says I have a good chance to live to a green old age, and it is my dearest hope to see thee bring a bride to Journey's End and to hold thy child in my arms. And for the success of thy career, thee should marry. Though a physician is bound by his professional vow to practise his art and to live his life in righteousness, most men prefer their wives to consult a married practitioner. In all these months, has no girl found favor in thy sight?"

" There are no girls so sweet as thee, Aunt Eunice," said Amory, choking. " Thee has spoiled me. I compare every girl for whom I feel a momentary attraction with the little Quaker lady of my love, and the little Quaker lady stays."

" I pray that thee may find her soon, and then thee must bid my image step aside. And when thee does speak words of love to a girl, I think thee will say them convincingly. I only ask that she be pure in heart, no matter how flippant her exterior. Pu-

rity of heart is compatible with considerable outward naughtiness, as I have found in the case of my wilful Elizabeth. And now, dear, forgive my clumsy blundering, which has saddened thy first day at home. Thee must not let it influence thy plans. Since thee is going to Baltimore, I would advise thee to go before the weather becomes yet more sultry. A sleeping-car is intolerable in midsummer."

"I am not going to Baltimore. To-morrow, Aunt Eunice, after I have satisfied myself about thy heart, we will go through the east wing together and plan the changes needed to adapt it to an office. And then we will telephone the carpenter and the plumber and the sign-painter that Dr. Russell will start his medical career in Freeport."

CHAPTER VI

IN WHICH AMORY VISITS JOHN HOWLAND

“**I** JUST met Amory Russell on the street and a stunning chap he is. Looks the exact image of his father, except for a dignity more like his Uncle Robert.”

“Has he arrived?” asked John Howland, taking off his glasses and looking at his partner. “I knew from Mrs. Russell that he was expected. Came straight from France?”

“Said he spent three days with Caroline,” explained Richard Vickery, glancing over the letters he held in his hand. “There’ll be some heartaches among the girls this summer, if I am any judge. Amory has all his father’s personal beauty, to say nothing of other attractions. Robert and Charles shared their father’s fortune equally; Robert’s children both died. Amory will eventually be his aunt’s heir, and you and I know that his grandfather’s property has about doubled since old Amory’s day. It will be interesting to see what happens now Robert is gone and there’s nobody to hold down the brakes.”

"Amory was a nice boy," observed John Howland, "rather a charming boy, too."

"So was Charles. He could charm the heart out of a woman just by looking at her. Charles was about the most attractive young fellow of our generation, and what a mess he did make of things! A runaway marriage, dissipation under the name of art in Paris, both he and his wife dead in their twenties, and the Robert Russells with their son to bring up."

"Which was the best thing that could possibly have happened to young Amory. I saw a good deal of him when he was growing up,—he and my Tom were friends, you know,—and I always liked Amory. To my mind, he has shown far more character already than that unfortunate Charles. Here he was with all the money he could use, and yet he plugged away at college, and he did good work in France. I met one of the head surgeons of the Red Cross down at Ogunquit the other day. We got to talking and somehow it came out that one of our Freeport boys had been in his unit. He spoke very highly of Amory. I don't believe he'll make ducks and drakes of the Russell money. After all, he had a good bringing-up, and Robert Russell put a lot of himself into that boy. Amory loves his Aunt Eunice; she will have considerable influence over him."

"It isn't possible for a fellow to be as good-looking as Amory and not have some imperfection," commented Mr. Vickery. "We'll see. Now I'm off for Boston if I can make that train."

"Just tell Miss Morton not to interrupt me unless it is important," said his companion.

John Howland, senior member of the legal firm of Howland and Vickery, did not turn at once to his work, but sat looking abstractedly from the window. He was a man over fifty, with iron-gray hair, and clean-cut features. His father had been the trusted adviser of three generations of Russells, and John, growing up in the office, stepped into the shoes left vacant at his father's death.

"Well"—he remarked to himself, "well,—I wonder,—I wonder."

With this enigmatic observation he turned his attention to the papers on his desk.

In the outer office, Miss Morton was presently accosted by a young gentleman she had never seen before, whose appearance gave her a distinct palpitation.

"May I see Mr. Howland?" inquired the visitor.

"Mr. Howland is very busy. He left word that he wasn't to be interrupted. Could I take any message to give him later?"

"But I think he will see me," said the young

man pleasantly. "I seem to be without a card. Would you mind asking if he can give Amory Russell a few minutes?"

"Oh," said Miss Morton, who had heard that name before. "Yes, I'll ask."

Amory looked around the rather barren outer office, not much changed since the days of Henry Howland. There stood the same uncomfortable chairs, the same maps hung on the walls, the same dusty law-books filled the cases.

"Mr. Howland will see you," announced Miss Morton, but following on the heels of his stenographer came the lawyer himself.

"Well, well, Amory, it is good to have you home!" he said cordially and inwardly added: "Jove! if he isn't young Charles again, except for a different expression." "Come in, come in," he added aloud. "I'd stop any work to bid you welcome."

Still clasping the hand of his visitor and patting his shoulder, he drew him into the inner office, closing the door upon the astonished Miss Morton, who was not accustomed to see her staid employer display any feeling.

But Amory understood. "Mr. Howland," he said at once and with a simple directness that was very engaging, "I—I can't begin to tell you how badly I feel about Tom."

Mr. Howland pressed the hand he still held. "We appreciated your writing, Amory," he said gruffly. "Tom did his duty and none of us can do more. I rather envy the young fellows who were permitted to give their all. Sometimes I don't know but it takes more courage to live than to die. Sit down, my boy, sit down."

"Thank you," said Amory, laying aside his hat and taking from his pocket a manila envelope. "I have something for you, Mr. Howland."

Placing it on the desk, he watched for a second while the lawyer opened it and then he walked over to the window. There was a long silence and then Mr. Howland blew his nose.

"This means a great deal, Amory," he said. "It is not every one who would have thought of such a kindness."

"I tried my best to get photographs of the graves of all our Freeport boys," said Amory, returning to the desk and seating himself. "There were eight, you know. I obtained them for all but one, a Peter Flynn. I never knew him myself, but when Aunt Eunice sent me his name, I did my best to locate him, but I couldn't. His seemed to be one of the cases where the poor chap was wiped out in a second."

Mr. Howland again held out his hand. "How about your hospital experience?" he asked when

they had exchanged a warm grasp. "You had a good long pull at it, didn't you?"

"Over a year of actual service, and of course for long after the armistice we were still patching up the poor fellows."

"It was a remarkable coincidence, your running across Putnam Avery."

"It was the hardest thing that happened to me," replied Amory simply, "and yet afterwards, I was thankful it did happen."

"Are you willing to tell me about it?" asked the lawyer, "or are you like the rest of the boys,—don't want to talk about your experiences in the war?"

"Like the others, there are a lot of things I just want to forget," said Amory, "that is, so far as one *can* forget. The war did something terrible to most of us, something words can't express, but I can talk about Putnam. My encountering him was a mere chance. We had been handling cases as fast as we could for twelve hours. I was just off duty and making for my tent to snatch some sleep, when one of the nurses asked me to look at a poor fellow, who she said was in the ambulance corps, a non-combatant of course, but wearing the Red Cross, and so a favorite target. I stepped aside to see if I could help him and it was Put."

Mr. Howland looked at him sympathetically.

"That must have been a shock," he observed at length.

"Except that when a man works day and night patching up the work of hell, he finally reaches the point where he can't feel much more. I didn't go to my tent and I went without the sleep for which I had started. The dear old chap knew me; he was conscious to the last. He was past all help, but fortunately he didn't suffer; I was able to prevent that. We talked of Freeport and of the harbor and our boat, and he gave me some messages for his father and mother. Of course I wrote, but I have yet to see them and to bring them some things that belonged to Put. Just at dawn he died in my arms."

"That was a great comfort to the Averys," said the lawyer, breaking the silence that followed.

"After a time, it was to me," said Amory.

"I have wondered how you young fellows with your Quaker training feel now about the war. Of course you had been brought up to think it wrong."

"Put and I were both in non-combatant service. I can tell you how I felt, Mr. Howland. After three months in the field hospital, I came to the conclusion that Friends are right in the principle that war is wrong, but personally, I can no longer stick to that principle when it is a question of warfare with devils."

"Right you are," said the lawyer briefly.

"And Jack?" asked Amory. "What is he doing?"

"I sent him back to finish at college and the dickens of a time he has been giving me. It seems as though he got just enough of the war to be utterly unsettled for any steady work."

"That's the case with half the men," commented Amory. "It is a nervous reaction. I felt it more or less myself during the first weeks I stayed on as interne at St. Etienne's. Mr. Howland, what about my Aunt Eunice?"

"What has she told you, Amory?"

"She has told me about her heart and of her visits to the specialist. I wish that you had written me immediately. I ought to have been told."

"Your Aunt Eunice made me promise not to tell you. It isn't possible to evade a promise to her. I argued as best I could, for I was anxious about her and I thought you should know. It was useless, for she had made up her mind and was adamant. I must confess I have been worried these six months past, for it put me in a difficult position. If anything happened to her, you would find it hard to forgive me. I was greatly relieved when her second visit showed matters no worse."

"She told me you had been extremely kind. I appreciate very much what you have done for her."

"There isn't a man in Freeport who would not do

anything in his power for Robert Russell's widow. We feel honored by the doing," said John Howland rather curtly.

"I ought to have been here," said Amory. "I would have come at once if I had known, but though she wrote me twice each week, she never said one word to let me even suspect she was not well. Of course, when Uncle Robert died, I could not come, but I got my discharge the April after the armistice. I need not have stayed for the hospital practice, only it was such a whacking opportunity to do work in constructive surgery."

"Since you did not know, I can't see that you have any reason to blame yourself," said Mr. Howland. "It was a mighty fine chance for a young doctor and must have set you ahead a good bit, given you a start in experience. Are you planning to specialize?"

"Not yet. I shall not think of that until I have had several years of general work."

"It's curious," said John Howland. "Mrs. Russell spoke of this the last time I was with her, and now I see you, Amory, I am reminded of it. It is odd how the deft fingers of your father,—for he was a clever painter, only he couldn't stick to anything long enough to succeed,—have cropped out in you with another sort of dexterity. Charles Russell had great ability, but he lacked any incentive to cul-

tivate it. It interests me that you have studied medicine."

"Well, I wanted to do something, and this interested me. And I think a man who isn't obliged to scratch gravel for his own living ought to do something with his life that will help others. Uncle Robert thought so, too."

Amory saw, without understanding, the curious expression that crossed the lawyer's face.

"I want to consult you," he went on. "Aunt Eunice and I have had an argument, and I finally agreed to her desire that I should ask your opinion. But I may as well tell you that I have fully made up my mind and that your opinion won't influence me unless it chances to coincide with my own."

"Then if it doesn't, I may as well keep silent," said the lawyer dryly. "I believe I can venture a guess as to the subject of that argument,—where you are to begin your professional work?"

"Yes," said Amory, looking a little surprised. "I had a bunch of mail this morning, letters that have been following me around for a fortnight, and among them is one from Colonel Fenwick, the commanding officer of the unit I served with. He makes me a tip-top offer to come into his New York office for a year, with big prospects later. I was amazed, for I never thought the old bird liked me.

He seldom opened his mouth except to give me a dressing-down.

"The same mail brought a letter from another man I met in Paris, who is head of that big new hospital in Chicago. He offers me a chance on his staff."

"Pretty flattering offers, Amory," said John Howland, smiling, but still with the same odd expression, rather as though he were deliberately trying to keep his face blank. "It would be hard to decide between the two. Which does Mrs. Russell favor?"

"I haven't shown her either letter," said Amory. "I don't intend to do so. That isn't the point. I think I ought to stay in Freeport, and Aunt Eunice, though she wants me to do so, is afraid it isn't the best thing for me professionally. If she knew of these letters, she would be more convinced than ever."

"You are Tom's age, aren't you?" asked the lawyer after a pause.

"Just twenty-six, sir."

"Well, what are you going to do?"

"Stay in Freeport as long as Aunt Eunice needs me."

There was a silence while Mr. Howland thoughtfully fingered the bronze paper-weight on his desk. His face had lost its peculiar look and wore an

expression that was indicative of satisfaction. When he did turn to Amory, it was with a smile.

"I used to like you as a boy, Amory," he said quietly. "I think I'm going to find you worth while as a man."

A corresponding smile came into Amory's eyes. "I am glad you think I am right," he said boyishly.

"I think you can very well afford a few years of your life for the happiness of your Aunt Eunice. And in the long run, I don't believe a man ever loses by doing his duty. Aside from that, it is my honest and unprejudiced opinion that Freeport is not an unfavorable ground for you."

"I think that also," said Amory. "Then I may tell Aunt Eunice that you approve my decision?"

"You may. And when do you put out your shingle?"

"Not immediately. I'd really like a little vacation. And of course, I shall have to see the State Board and obtain permission to practise."

"Necessary formalities, to be sure. Well, I think you deserve time to play. Still heart-whole, Amory? Better for a doctor to marry."

"So Aunt Eunice says," laughed Amory.

"Freeport will show you some pretty girls. And now for a bit of business. Mrs. Russell and I between us have looked after your affairs and I have used my best judgment whenever a decision had to

be made. But now you are back and going to stay in Freeport, you may want to take things into your own hands. If you do, I'll render an exact account of my stewardship."

"I'm not such a fool as to bid a trusted pilot step overboard, Mr. Howland. I want to understand my affairs rather better than I do at present, and I shall ask you to explain exactly how they stand, but I mean to leave everything in your hands as Uncle Robert did. I hope you don't object."

"I shall endeavor to serve your interests as faithfully as I did those of Robert," was the brief answer. "By the way, Amory, you have never seen your uncle's will?"

"I know its purport, that everything was left to Aunt Eunice, which was as it should be, with the exception of a considerable sum which Uncle Robert set aside to accumulate for an unspecified purpose."

John Howland rose and crossed to the safe at one side of his office. Opening an inner compartment, he selected a paper.

"This is a copy of Robert's will," he said, handing it to the young man. "Its wording may interest you."

Amory unfolded the single sheet. It was dated five years earlier. After the usual preliminaries, it set apart a certain sum of money to be kept in trust for five years after the death of the testator, or un-

til the accumulated principal and interest should reach a specified amount.

“The executors of this trust,” read the document, “shall be John W. Howland, Andrew J. Wheatland, and Henry C. Avery, all of the town of Freeport, Massachusetts. With the said John W. Howland, I have left complete instructions as to the final purport and execution of this trust, and I charge him and his fellow-executors to make its nature public to no man until the expiration of the time appointed, unless, before that date, the cumulation of the sum specified shall take place.

“The rest of my estate, my house in Freeport, known as Journey’s End, and all other real and personal property of which I may die possessed, I leave to my wife, Eunice Mary Russell, to be hers absolutely.

“The omission of my brother Charles’s children, Caroline Russell Chittick, and Amory Russell, is intentional, because I consider both to be already in receipt of incomes sufficient for any reasonable needs, and because I have every confidence in my wife’s discretion and judgment. But to my nephew, Amory, who has been to me as a son, I leave my blessing and my undying love.

“I appoint as the executors of this will, my wife, Eunice Mary Russell, and my trusted friend and

adviser, John W. Howland, both to serve without bond."

John Howland busied himself about his desk while Amory read the document, but he was quite aware of the sudden moisture that filled the eyes of his visitor when they reached a certain sentence.

"Then even my Aunt Eunice does not know the purpose of the trust here created?" Amory asked after a time.

"No. It cannot be known for some time yet, though I am inclined to think it will be before the expiration of the full five years. Take that with you, Amory; you are entitled to a copy."

"Uncle Robert so enjoyed helping others," observed Amory, folding the paper. "I am sure his purpose is to do something for Freeport. Thank you, Mr. Howland. I've taken an unpardonable amount of your time."

"No more than I chose to give you. Come in later on and I'll have your accounts and investments arranged for you to see. And come up to the house, Amory. Our door is always open for you."

"It's good of you to say that, sir. I should think you and Mrs. Howland and the Averys would want to avoid me, since I came back when Tom and Put didn't."

"We don't feel so, Amory. The fact that you

were the intimate friend of our dead sons only gives Henry and me a very special interest in you."

When the young man had gone, John Howland went thoughtfully to his safe. With another key he unlocked a private compartment and from a secret drawer concealed therein, took an envelope marked: "Russell Trust."

He spent ten minutes in reading the paper it contained and then locked and double-locked its abiding-place.

"Well —" he said again. "That will was made when Amory was just twenty-one. From this interview, it looks to me,—it very much looks to me,—as though Robert's hopes for young Amory were likely to be justified."

CHAPTER VII

IN WHICH AMORY HELPS A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS AND
SEES THE *WHITEWING* AGAIN

FROM the lawyer's office, Amory went straight to a duty that could but be hard, a call on Putnam Avery's parents. It was one that could not be avoided nor postponed, and yet proved far harder than he anticipated. He himself was bound to them by ties of affectionate association, and shared sincerely in their sorrow. Mrs. Avery tried her best to greet him calmly, but ended by crying on his shoulder, while Amory sat with arms about her, telling her again every incident of that night in the field hospital, every word Putnam had said. In the big chair opposite, Henry Avery, his eyes concealed by a shadowing hand, listened in silence.

When Amory reached Journey's End, the afternoon was drawing on. He went straight through the hall to the garden door.

"Oh, Amory," said Mrs. Russell's voice, "I am glad thee has come. I am on the terrace and here is Elizabeth, who is in pain from some object in her eye."

Amory opened the screen-door and stepped out on

the bricked platform. There, in her accustomed chair, sat his aunt, dressed in silvery gray silk, and close beside her the girl whom he had met in the garden the previous morning, handkerchief pressed to her face and looking anything but glad to see him. As a matter of fact, Elizabeth had watched him leave Journey's End, and deliberately chosen the time of his absence to visit Mrs. Russell.

"Elizabeth, this is my nephew, Amory," said the soft voice. "Elizabeth Emerson, the dear young friend, of whom I spoke to thee, Amory. I have been trying to relieve her pain, but I cannot find the speck which is causing it."

"If Miss Emerson will permit me," said Amory.
"Just a moment until I wash my hands."

He smiled as he went into the house, for nothing could have been less cordial than Elizabeth's acknowledgment of the introduction. She did not even offer her hand, merely nodded stiffly with no trace of the freakish manner in which she had taken leave of him after their encounter in the garden. In less than the time specified he was back and putting a chair into place.

"Will you sit here so that I may have the light as I want it?"

Elizabeth did not speak. She was mortified and distressed at her predicament, but she did as requested. The next second a hand with a firm but

very gentle contact touched her cheek and forehead, pressed back the lid.

"Please look upward," said Amory. "Now, to your left."

Something touched the eyeball softly, and the next second Elizabeth, her reddened eye still weeping, was free from pain.

"There is the speck," said Amory, showing her a minute black dot on his otherwise spotless handkerchief.

"Such a little thing to hurt so much," observed Elizabeth.

"Now, some hot water will complete the cure," replied Dr. Russell, going into the house to return presently, carrying a brass finger-bowl.

"Just dabble it with this," he said, offering her the bowl and a folded bit of antiseptic gauze. "As hot as you can stand it."

"I always like to take things out of people's eyes," he observed as Elizabeth complied in silence. "That and getting wax out of ears are two of the few completely satisfactory things a doctor can do. So many times we really can't set matters absolutely right, but those simple operations give such instant relief that it is a pleasure to perform them."

"I feel very much indebted," murmured Elizabeth in a formal manner.

"Well, you can do me a good turn in exchange," said Amory with a hint of fun in his voice. "You see, I'm just back in the United States. Will you kindly inform me, Miss Emerson, if the hair-cut which the Freeport barber has inflicted upon me is the latest and most desirable style?"

Elizabeth took a good look at the back of the handsome head presented for her inspection, forgot her dignity and began to giggle helplessly.

"Amory Russell!" exclaimed his aunt. "What a naughty boy thee is! Why did thee have thy hair cut in that uncouth fashion?"

Amory laughed as heartily as Elizabeth. "Because, little aunt of mine, I was reading the paper, and didn't look into the glass until the matter was past all help. When I did look and beheld myself, shaved above the ears on sides and back, I nearly fell out of the chair. Words failed me. I was about to arise and murder the barber, when the look of pious joy on his face as he admired the work of his hands struck me, and I laughed instead. Thee should be thankful, Aunt Eunice, that I looked up when I did. Consider how thee would feel had I come home with not a hair between me and heaven!"

"What a ridiculous boy thee is," sighed Mrs. Russell, while Elizabeth continued to laugh. "Thee is certainly a sight. Thy neck is so tanned

that thee has no idea how absurd is that shaven stretch to the very tips of thy ears."

"Then I must keep my face turned toward thee," observed her nephew sweetly. "But tell me, Miss Emerson, is this really the proper thing for Freeport?"

"The very latest fashion," Elizabeth informed him. "I can assure you that you won't be conspicuous."

"Reassure thyself, Aunt Eunice. And I will endeavor to tan the newly-shaven portion to match the rest. Miss Emerson, did you, by any chance, do war work in France?"

"No," said Elizabeth bluntly. "Dot and Marion, my older sisters, both went, Dot as a secretary with the Red Cross and Marion with the French Relief. I wanted to go, and Mother said I might, but she was running a hostess house at one of the camps, and it was hard on Dad to have us all away. So I stayed with him and my little brother."

"I asked because it seems as though I had met you somewhere before. Possibly it might have been one of your sisters, at some Red Cross dance or entertainment."

"It might have been Marion. She and I look something alike."

"Perhaps it was. Just let me see how your eye is now."

Elizabeth raised her head, this time less ungraciously, to permit a close inspection. "It's much better and the irritation is entirely gone," she said.

Amory looked carefully at her eye, but the professional examination completed, took one fleeting glance of a more personal nature.

"Very dark slate-gray, almost black," he said to himself. "Curious eyes,—like stormy thunder-clouds."

"Yes, it looks all right," he added aloud. A whimsical wish came over him to see Elizabeth in the unregenerate garments which had aroused his aunt's indignation. Whatever Mrs. Russell's purpose in telling him that story, she had succeeded in arousing his interest. To-day, there was certainly nothing to be criticized in Elizabeth's dainty and becoming apparel.

"I wish thee wouldn't hurry," said Mrs. Russell as the girl made a motion to go. "She has been telling me, Amory, of her visit to Neponset and to Bristol, and with what interest she saw the shipyards in both places."

"At Neponset they were working on a big yacht," said Elizabeth; "such a beautiful, live thing she was. And yet she was named the *Vanitie*. I hated her to have that name, for whatever else a boat is, it has too much dignity to be frivolous."

"That is exactly the way I feel," said Amory,

rather surprised at this somewhat subtle comment. "A boat may be coquettish and skittish, but it is like the playfulness of a kitten or a spirited horse, something too full of the joy of life to be vain. Do you enjoy sailing, Miss Emerson?"

"Very much. But I'm not allowed to have a boat. Dad is willing to let me sail if I take some old moss-backed skipper along, but he won't let me go by myself,—not even with Billy. I really must go, dear Aunt Eunice. I came only for a minute and I've stopped forever."

"Thee is so welcome that thy visits always seem short. Hand me my wrap, Amory, and we will walk to the sea-wall with Elizabeth. The garden-shears, too, dear, that she may have some roses."

The three sauntered slowly down the central garden walk, past the sun-dial, Elizabeth and Mrs. Russell consulting over the flowers. Amory was rather silent. He obediently cut the roses indicated by his aunt, and to-day Elizabeth did not specify their color. As they came in full view of the harbor, Amory gave a sudden exclamation.

Elizabeth looked up. He stood with gaze fixed on a pretty white boat anchored off-shore, a fair-sized sloop with the fine, clean lines of a yacht. Freshly-painted, with a green trimming, she dipped and rose buoyantly on the harbor swell, her bare mast describing rakish circles against the sky.

Nearer at hand was her dinghy, painted to match and fastened to a pulley-float.

Elizabeth thought the boat a beauty, but was also struck by the expression of blank surprise on Dr. Russell's face. She glanced at his aunt, to see there a look of sweet expectancy.

"Aunt Eunice, thee is truly adorable!" exclaimed Amory the next second. "My own *Whitewing*! and thee has had her put in shape. I shall positively have to hug thee at once, and if Miss Emerson doesn't like it, she may look the other way!"

Elizabeth only smiled sympathetically.

"Who but thee would have thought of it?" Amory went on, still standing with one arm around the slender gray-clad figure.

"I knew thee would wish to sail, so in Fourth month, when thee wrote thy intention to be here this early summer, I sent for Ezra Lindsay and directed him to put the *Whitewing* in good condition with fresh paint and new cordage or canvas as needed. She should have been here to greet thy arrival, but Ezra found her seams had opened badly during her long stay out of water. Ezra is not a rapid workman, as thee knows, but he is a faithful one. He brought her during thy absence this afternoon and said he had sailed her around Clam Island and that she was shipshape for thy use."

"Isn't she adorable, Miss Emerson?" asked

Amory boyishly. "Aunt Eunice, I mean," he added as Elizabeth glanced at the boat.

"Indeed she is!" agreed Elizabeth heartily, with a charming expression suddenly lighting her face.

"There, children, you should not exaggerate. I have told thee in the past, Amory, that thee 'adores' no one but thy Creator."

"That's all thee knows about me, Aunt Eunice," said Amory, laughing so contagiously that Elizabeth laughed also, both at his tone and at the abrupt impulsive embrace in which he again seized Mrs. Russell.

"It was simply bully of thee. This afternoon I was thinking of the *Whitewing* and longing to be out in her, but I knew she'd leak like a sieve. I came home meaning to have her put in the water at once."

He was silent and his aunt, ever watching his face, knew that across his mind flashed a memory of the boys who used to sail the *Whitewing* with him. It was borne in upon her that Amory must take his first trip alone. Out in the wide stretches of the sunny harbor, in the surging tide and the clean salt smell of the sea, the memories that came to him would be tender and loving but not wholly sad. And for his healing, he must go out to meet them alone.

"Some day soon, when the wind is fair," she

said, turning to Elizabeth, "if Amory will take us, would thee like to try the *Whitewing*? Amory is a careful seaman, but it is best for him to take her first by himself, get his hand in as he would say, but when he has done that, would thee like to go?"

"I'd simply adore it!" exclaimed Elizabeth impetuously, and then clapped her hand over her mouth with a mischievous startled look at Mrs. Russell. The gesture was so spontaneous and her expression so precisely that of a naughty child, that it swept the sadness from Amory's face and sent him into sympathetic amusement.

"Unmannerly children!" sighed Eunice Russell in pretended displeasure. "You should both be set down to an hour's meditation. But I like to sail, Elizabeth, and I know the main sheet when I see it, and a schooner from a brig. When Amory has taken the *Whitewing* for a trial spin, we will plan a little expedition together."

CHAPTER VIII

IN WHICH AMORY CONSIDERS THE DRAGON

WITHIN a few days Journey's End became the scene of a small army of busy workmen, since to arrange the east wing for the use of a physician required numerous changes.

Having heard John Howland's approval of Amory's decision to stay in Freeport, Mrs. Russell made no further protest, but accepted his determination with a thankful heart. Amory refused the two offers made him, with firmness but not without regret. It was true that he already had to his credit more hospital experience than falls to the share of the average young medical graduate, but to accept either offer would have thrown him in contact with men disposed to be helpful, and who could have placed in his way opportunities to speedy advancement.

Amory fully realized that the decision was in a sense a sacrifice, but he did not permit himself to reconsider nor to show his aunt those letters. Once, after the matter was settled and the thing irrevocable, he was annoyed as well as surprised by a

sudden thought which appeared thrust upon his attention from some subconscious depth.

"The palmist at that fool festival into which I wandered gave me a piece of advice," the thought took shape. "Now, what was it?"

Amory cudgeled his mind for the words of that warning, and the next moment they stood before his mental vision as though written in fire: "Think twice, yes, three times, before you take any important step in life, and ask advice not only of your heart, but of your intellect."

Amory sat considering the memory. He had no faith in the palmist, no belief in anything of the kind. He had been brought up to look upon such matters as tricks and deception, but he had dealt enough with his fellow-men to be an observant and keen reader of character. He had come out of that booth with the impression that the lady personifying the Italian princess was herself in earnest and practising no conscious deceit.

"Well, I have made a decision which will probably affect my whole life," he said to himself, "and I can't claim that I made it in haste. It is true that Aunt Eunice's condition at present is not such as to be a source of immediate anxiety, and true that I have turned down two offers most chaps would have jumped at. When I analyze that decision down to the ground, I did listen to my heart

and not my head. Still, I chose what seemed my duty, and John Howland agreed with me, and he is a keen man of business. And Uncle Henry Avery thinks I have done the right thing; he told me so. No, I don't regret it, though, of course, I couldn't afford to do it if I were dependent on what I can make out of a practice here. And I have been taught to believe that when one earnestly seeks for guidance in a difficulty, a clear leading will be given. This seemed the path indicated for me, but neither Fenwick nor Cutter will understand."

Neither one did understand, and both wrote Amory plainly that he was making a serious mistake, though Dr. Fenwick tempered his letter by a kindly assurance that he would keep Dr. Russell in mind. Amory shut those letters into his desk and went on with his preparations.

"Why does thee never use the east parlor?" he asked one morning when he and his aunt were returning from their usual inspection of the work accomplished on the previous day. It was yet early and the men had not arrived.

"I really cannot tell thee, Amory," said Mrs. Russell as they stood on the threshold of the room specified. "It is just a vague dislike I feel for the place, a foolish dislike, since I cannot put it into words. Whenever I come here for a few moments, it seems to me that my mind becomes unruly and I

cannot control nor concentrate my thoughts. I have never been especially drawn to this room."

"In itself it is beautiful," said Amory, glancing around. "The mahogany furniture is especially fine, and I like the rugs and the ivory dragon cavitating on the mantel."

"The rugs are valuable," replied his aunt. "Thy Uncle Robert considered the Shiraz there one of the finest in his collection. And the Beluchistan he also prized. It was but a Turcoman rug which Caroline chose for her experiments in magic, and though it was costly it was not without price as is that Shiraz."

"I know very little about the rugs," observed Amory, "only that they are beautiful. Thee must teach me the distinctions between them."

"Robert enjoyed them as so many pictures," said his aunt, looking at the wonderful silken prayer-mat hanging on the wall opposite. "I, too, care for them, but I have never liked that dragon."

"I like the old chap," said Amory, crossing the room to look at it. "He's a marvelous piece of work."

The ivory dragon in question was about a foot in length and six inches high, standing on a green velvet mat under a low glass bell which protected from dust its intricately carved and lapped scales. Such nicety of execution seemed scarcely possible

for human hands; it had almost the perfection of nature. The eyes, faintly tinged with green, fairly glared at the observer, and from its mouth extended a venomous tongue. Almost one could hear the hiss of escaping hate.

"That carving is very old," said Mrs. Russell. "I recall that Robert dated the dragon far beyond the Christian era."

"It's odd," observed Amory thoughtfully, "but this dragon is almost the only curiosity in Journey's End that Uncle Robert never told me about. I believe I could pass an examination on practically everything else that any of the Russells brought from India or China, but I don't know the first thing about this."

"Neither do I, save that Robert once told me that it came to his father, the third Amory, with a sinister story attached, but I have never heard the story, nor do I know whether Robert himself knew it."

"Didn't it once have an amulet of some sort about its neck?"

"Thee is right, Amory. There was tied to its neck by a golden wire a square of jade with a single large baroque pearl set in its centre and surrounding the pearl some characters in the Chinese language. It was curious and strange, but of no especial value, and when it caught Caroline's eye on her last visit

here, I took it from the dragon's neck and gave it to her. I was surprised that she cared for it, for Caroline has her mother's jewels as well as the many Jermain has given her, but this was barbaric enough to be in the present fashion, and Caroline was pleased. She attached it to her golden chain as a pendant and, if one cares for that sort of personal ornament, it was not uncomely."

"I can imagine it would be rather stunning," said Amory, passing on. "I thought the dragon didn't look just as I remembered it, but it is the absence of that amulet."

"If thee likes this room especially, we will sit here," added his aunt.

"Oh, I don't. It is more stately and formal than the west room. That lends itself to thy knitting and my books and papers well enough."

"I have found more peace in the west wing," said his aunt. "I will tell Lydia that we are ready for breakfast. It seems to be late."

Amory delayed, looking around the east parlor with its many odd and valuable ornaments. The blue vases on either side of the dragon he knew to be worth their weight in gold; the Boston Museum had once offered to buy them. To set such a price upon a bit of porcelain seemed absurd. With a sweep of the hand he could brush one aside and it would lie a useless heap of fragments. That Shiraz

rug, too, with its shimmering colors and silken texture,—in three minutes could be reduced to a heap of valueless fragments. The jeweled sword in its scabbard was doubtless as effective after centuries of disuse as in the days when some oriental nobleman used it to crack the skulls of his enemies.

And all these had crossed more seas than one. What tales of distant lands, of love and hate and far-off, shadowy sorrows and sin they might tell, could they but speak, could they but impress upon a susceptible mind the aura of past environment, too subtle for ordinary human senses to perceive.

“Breakfast is ready, Amory,” said Lydia’s voice. “Thy aunt is seated.”

Amory came back from his musings with a sense of irritation over the interruption. He was surprised to realize that he had drawn the sword and held its naked blade. Down its grooved hilt ran a little shower of loose pearls, making curious music in their course.

“Thee had better put that aside, Amory,” said Lydia. “The coffee will cool.”

“What on earth makes me so cross?” thought Amory, appreciating that he had slammed the sword into its protecting case with a petulance entirely foreign to his nature. “Why shouldn’t Lydia tell me not to keep Aunt Eunice waiting?”

“There are letters for thee,” said his aunt as he

joined her on the terrace where Lydia had laid the table. "The postman must have reversed his route. At times our mail comes between ten and eleven, but again we are among the first deliveries. It was always a pleasure to come to my breakfast and to see, even at a distance, the censor's stamp upon an envelope. It proved a slight trial when the postman, no doubt for his own good purposes, came to Journey's End at the close of his route."

Amory glanced at his mail. "Thee will excuse me, Aunt Eunice? Ah, this is what I thought, my license to practise medicine in the State of Massachusetts. Now, when thee has need of my services, I can offer them legitimately. My weekly examination of thy heart, even the removal of a cinder from Elizabeth Emerson's eye, have not been completely within the law."

"I have sometimes thought the men who make the laws do not show marked intelligence," said Mrs. Russell so gently that Amory burst out laughing.

"Especially when they insist upon thy nephew's showing good reason why he should think himself fit to cure the ills of Freeport? Thee is unlike Aunt Ruth Avery. When Put finished at Tech and went to build a railroad in Cuba, she said to me: 'Do you think my Putnam *knows* enough to build a real railway?' Now, if I should attempt to fly

an airplane without instruction, thee would express confidence in my success."

"And is thee not glad that somebody in the world has absolute confidence in thee? Not that I wish to go on thy first flight."

"It is worth everything, Aunt Eunice. And we shall not need to risk the airplane, for Couch says here that the car I ordered is ready for delivery. We will go for a joy-ride to-night."

"And that will be safer than thy untamed airplane. Did thee hear the Emersons depart very early this morning?"

"No," said Amory. "Where are they going?"

"It is Mrs. Emerson and the two older girls, and they are motoring to Bar Harbor, where they will spend most of the summer with Mrs. Emerson's sister. Elizabeth did not go. She is the daughter who takes thought for her father, and she does not willingly leave him at the mercy of servants. In another week William departs for a boys' camp, and that will leave the father and daughter alone."

"It's rather good of her not to go back on Mr. Emerson," commented her nephew.

"Elizabeth and her father hold each other in affection, perhaps more so than the other members of the family," remarked Mrs. Russell thoughtfully. "I do not think Elizabeth is wholly happy with her mother. Mrs. Emerson's ambitions for her girls

are worldly, and while Dorothy and Marion seem to approve and to fall in with them, Elizabeth alternates between wild moods when she will go as far and do as strange things as any of the reckless young people, and others when she is thoughtful and womanly. During the war, while she felt that duty required her to stay with her father, she threw herself heart and soul into work at home, and showed herself most efficient both in its planning and in its execution. At the time of the influenza epidemic, when nurses were few, she went personally into the homes of the stricken. When I encounter Elizabeth in one of her frivolous moods, I recall to my mind how she tended sick children in the isolation hospital. There was a night when a nurse was urgently needed for a boy of sixteen, a poor boy seriously ill with pneumonia in a forlorn home. Elizabeth, who had taken the courses in first-aid, listened to the directions of the physician, and alone stood by that lad and cared for him until an experienced attendant could be secured. Without doubt she saved his life.

“I count as a gain from this terrible conflict,” Mrs. Russell continued, “that I saw below the frivolous exterior of some of my neighbors. I found in those whom I supposed had no serious ideal or ambition sincere desire to help and ability to do so. I found unexpected fine qualities in those

whom I blindly thought to be devoted only to the pursuit of self-indulgent pleasure. It was a lesson to me and I have tried to follow more humbly and more carefully the commandment against judging others. I see the smile in thy eyes, Amory, but thee does not know my temptations, how serious they are nor how often I weakly yield. Shall I refill thy cup?"

"Please," said Amory. "Is it too sunny for thee on the harbor, or would thee like to go sailing again?"

"I felt some slight fatigue the other day when we went and took Elizabeth," said his aunt, lifting the heavy silver coffee-pot. "Perhaps it would be better for me not to go out in this sun. Why does thee not ask Phebe Ames to go with thee? It would please Hannah to have thee do so, and would not be displeasing to Phebe herself."

"I might," said Amory. "Fortunately I called there the other night, so it won't seem too informal to telephone an invitation, will it? Is thee sure thee does not wish to go? Will thee trust Phebe and me unchaperoned together?"

"Thee thinks thee teases me, Amory," said his aunt, handing back the cup, "but thee forgets that I taught thee proper manners, and that Phebe is the granddaughter of Hannah Ames."

CHAPTER IX

IN WHICH ELIZABETH LOSES HER TEMPER AND LOOKS OVER A HIGH WALL

ELIZABETH'S intimacy with their charming Quaker neighbor had never escaped the observant eyes of her family. It was a "crush" that amused her sisters, slightly astonished her mother, and met with sympathy from her father. Having been in the Freeport bank one day when Mrs. Russell entered to transact some business, Mr. Emerson, noticing the extreme deference paid her by the cashier, the courtesy with which the manager came himself to attend to the slender lady in the quaint bonnet and gray silk gown, had looked with interested attention which soon became respect.

He listened with genuine pleasure to the tales Elizabeth related of the lovely owner of the great house next door, and at her request, went with his daughter to call. After that call, though a comparative stranger in Freeport, he would willingly have performed for Eunice Russell any service she might ask. There was in John Emerson's nature a

strain which responded at once to the simple charm of her manner and to the story told by her face. Her influence upon his favorite daughter could not be otherwise than fine, and he secretly thought Elizabeth improved by the friendship. He could scarcely put into words the vague discomfort and unhappiness caused by the devotion of his wife and his older daughters to society; he only knew that divided from the Fiske house by a ten-foot brick wall, lay a little world of roses and gentle living, where his Elizabeth seemed to cultivate qualities which did not flourish at home.

Dorothy and Marion considered Elizabeth's liking for Mrs. Russell merely a queer whim. Bess was liable to be odd and to like odd people, and though both agreed that Mrs. Russell was an "old dear" and Journey's End a treasure-trove of lovely things, neither cared in the least to stay in its atmosphere. So, until the advent of Amory, Elizabeth was laughed at mildly, but left to do as she pleased. If she liked to help Mrs. Russell garden or run over to show her new dancing-frock, it was funny, but just like Bess.

With Dr. Russell's return, the attitude of the Emerson family underwent a change. As Billy expressed it, they began to sit up and take notice. And the notice annoyed Elizabeth.

After her first blundering into the garden, un-

aware that Amory was at home, and her call at a time when she knew he had left the house, she stayed away until Mrs. Russell telephoned to ask if she would go sailing.

The rest of the family considered the invitation a huge joke, and Elizabeth, resenting their amusement, went down to the *Whitewing* in a mood which made her eyes more like storm-clouds than ever and which did not relax until she was well under the spell of Mrs. Russell's sweet influence. She was a silent Elizabeth, save for one or two spontaneous outbreaks which gave a glimpse of her real self, and which made Amory wonder why this girl, every time he encountered her, began by being sulky and ended in a mood which attracted him and left him wishing to see her again. During the latter part of their sail Elizabeth forgot her irritation and frankly enjoyed herself. When the little yacht again reached her moorings and the sails dropped and lay in folds in the soft evening light, she helped furl them and stepped into the tender to be rowed ashore, with a real peace in her heart, a peace which quickly fled when she encountered her sisters in the up-stairs sitting-room belonging to the three girls.

"Did your blue linen middy make its expected impression?" drawled Dorothy, who lay reading on the couch, while Marion sat at the desk, her pen

poised over a letter to her fiancé. Marion had come home from France with an "understanding," an arrangement which Mrs. Emerson eagerly sanctioned and Mr. Emerson reluctantly tolerated.

"I don't know what you mean," said Elizabeth curtly.

"On Dr. Russell, darling. Wasn't that why you wore it? I believe you've been cultivating Mrs. Russell all these months so as to have the inside track now."

"I'd hate to own such a horrid mind as you have, Dot," said Elizabeth indignantly. "You know that isn't true. She's a dear and I loved her before I even knew she had a nephew. And it was she who invited me, not Dr. Russell. I don't think he cared a rap about my being aboard. He was taken up with his boat and with his aunt. He was sweet to her, and just ordinarily polite to me."

"Do you hear, Marion?" chuckled Dorothy. "Bess expected him to be sweet to *her*! That's pretty rapid action, my child. Don't crowd him! Consider, too, that you had a third person present."

"I think you are hateful, Dot. You know I didn't mean that. I don't believe any girl would come before his aunt; he is devoted to her."

"Why, naturally," said the exasperating Dorothy. "He has good reason for devotion. Bert

Conwell told me that Mrs. Russell's husband left everything to her; didn't give Amory a single cent. If he wants it after his aunt dies, he'd better make up to her. Bert says Mrs. Russell is the wealthiest woman in Freeport."

"I don't believe one word of it," sputtered Elizabeth. "He isn't nice only because it's to his interest, but because he loves her. Nobody could see them together and doubt it."

"Somebody told me," said Marion, speaking for the first time, "that Dr. Russell inherited a lot of money from his own father. It wouldn't be a bad thing for Bess and certainly ——"

The sound of a violently closed door broke Marion's sentence.

"Pass the cigarettes, that's a dear," sighed Dorothy. "Of course, it would be a fine thing for Bess; Mother said so herself. We didn't know Mrs. Russell's nephew was such a catch, but the girls are all talking about him, and it looks as though Bess knew the whole time. If I weren't going to Bar Harbor and you weren't spoken for, we might have some fun. I really didn't give Bess credit for being so far-sighted. If she manages right, it ought not to be a hard job."

"I wouldn't bet on Elizabeth," observed Marion, selecting a cigarette for herself and throwing the box to Dorothy. "And I wouldn't push her too far,

Dot. If you say too much she'll turn balky. Hush, she's coming back."

Elizabeth reopened the door with a scowling dignity that included in its disapproval both sisters. She cast a glance at the table.

"Is it that letter you dropped?" asked Marion, pointing to the envelope on the floor.

"I see now why you chose not to go to Bar Harbor, Bess," drawled Dot between puffs of her cigarette. "But Father answers very well for an excuse."

"I stayed with Father all the time you two were in France," snapped Elizabeth. "He's no more of an excuse now than he was then."

Dorothy looked reflectively at the door, slamming for the second time.

"Bess has such a temper!" she sighed. "I'm just as well pleased that she decided not to go to Maine."

In her own room, Elizabeth cried for fifteen minutes, bitterly, resentfully, and over something she could feel rather than express in words, cried in angry protest over being credited with unworthy and sordid motives. Her sisters seemed somehow to profane that bit of pure idealistic friendship which had touched with beauty her irresponsible girlhood. And yet Elizabeth was too fundamentally honest not to acknowledge that the part of her

nature which sometimes broke into wild extravagances of youthful folly might be capable of low motives.

After a time she rose from her bed, dried her eyes and sat by the window watching the sunset splendors that yet lent color to the harbor. It was absolutely no use to care because Dot and Marion misjudged her; they estimated others incorrectly as well. Dr. Russell had been in a gay, engagingly boyish mood that afternoon, singing his aunt an absurd nautical ditty about a ship called the *Walloping Window-Blind*, saying funny, teasing things to her, which Mrs. Russell met with bright counter-thrusts of her own. Could Marion and Dot listen to such a conversation and believe it sprang from anything but deep and enduring affection on either side? Elizabeth did not credit them with such stupid blindness.

“He was perfectly dear to her,” she thought, “in the nicest kind of way, too. If he ever really made love to a girl —”

Blushing and indignant with herself for the very thought, Elizabeth undressed, went to bed and resolutely read until she was sleepy.

A week after the sail and this conversation, Elizabeth and her father sat down to a late breakfast, the rest of the family having made their early start for Maine.

"It's good of you to stay with me, Bess," observed Mr. Emerson over his newspaper and his second cup of coffee. "I appreciate it."

"I hate it at Aunt Anne's," admitted Elizabeth bluntly. "I hate a lot of things, Daddy. I guess I'm growing hateful."

"Well, don't end by hating me," said her father whimsically. "What! a telegram?"

"Yes, sir," replied the maid, presenting it at his elbow.

"This means New York," said Mr. Emerson, having read it. "I suppose I shall have to go, but I am sorry to leave you alone over night with only Billy, my girl. By the way," he added, running a discontented hand through his hair, "where *is* Billy?"

"Gone for a picnic on the dunes with five other boys and a perfectly *immense* lunch. No, Daddy, they're not going near a boat. It is to be a clam roast, I know, for I gave Billy the money for the clams."

"I'm sorry you'll have a lonely day. Can't you telephone some girl to come to lunch with you or go to lunch with her? Or come into Boston with me. I'll meet you at noon and take you to the Copley."

"I think I'll have a quiet day at home, Dad. Thank you just the same."

"Whatever pleases you, Bess. Will you pack a

bag for me or tell somebody to do it? I'll stop for it on my way to the station, and I'll telegraph tomorrow if I'm not coming back."

"I'll pack your bag," said his daughter, and about ten she went to her father's room to do so. Her task completed, she stepped to the window, intending to adjust a curtain left askew by a careless maid.

"Why, I didn't realize Daddy's room overlooked the garden of Journey's End," she thought. "There's the sun-dial and the fountain and down below the sea-wall the *Whitewing*. I can see a tiny bit of the terrace and windows open in the corner room. That must be Dr. Russell's room, for Aunt Eunice's is at the front."

Elizabeth stood idly, for the picture spread below was charming in its sunlit serenity.

"There's dear Aunt Eunice," she thought, and leaned from the window ready to call. She checked herself suddenly as she saw that Mrs. Russell was not alone, but accompanied by a girl about her own age, a slender girl dressed in white. As she looked, both turned back.

"Amory," called Mrs. Russell's sweet voice, "bring Phebe's wrap from the terrace."

Elizabeth heard the assenting answer and the next second saw Dr. Russell coming from the house, oars over his shoulder, a dark blue sweater over one

arm and a rose-colored one on the other. He was singing as he came and the words, in the decidedly musical voice Elizabeth had already heard, were distinctly audible:

“ ‘Ah, love, do you deem me cruel
That I leave you here alone?
But the wide sea calls her children;
Each goes at last to his own.’ ”

“ Yes, that’s true,” thought Elizabeth bitterly, “ of every one of us according to the company we keep and the ideals we try to reach. I’m not on a par with the people who live in Journey’s End and I never shall be. And Dot is hateful, just hateful to me.”

But she did not leave the window, and presently she saw two white-clad figures row out in the dinghy, saw Dr. Russell help his companion aboard the *Whitewing*, saw the mainsail raised and the boat head for the outer harbor. Presently Mrs. Russell returned to the house.

“ Phebe is a Quaker name,” Elizabeth’s thoughts ran as the little yacht grew more distant. “ Probably she is somebody he’s always known and is glad to get back to. He’s put up the flying-jib. There can’t be so much wind as we had the other day. I wonder whether I could go over to Journey’s End and transplant that phlox without anybody’s know-

ing. The *Whitewing* won't be back for two hours at least and Aunt Eunice needn't see me if I work only in that border. Somehow I think I might feel less hateful if I were on the other side of that wall for a while."

CHAPTER X

IN WHICH BILLY THINKS HE IS DYING

BILLY'S picnic on the dunes proved all that a boy of fourteen could demand of a pleasant day, boon companions and plentiful food. Elizabeth thought of him more than once during the passing hours, for she, too, loved the dunes, and in some of her moods would drive her car till further progress became impossible, and tramp for half a day in their solitudes.

When her brother arrived that night, tired, sunburned and incredibly dirty, but in excellent spirits and completely satisfied with his day, she was waiting for him on the beach and listened with sisterly appreciation to his tale. Billy approved of Elizabeth, openly declaring that she was worth Dot and Marion put together, and on finding her alone at home, loudly proclaimed his satisfaction.

"I don't mind Dad; he doesn't butt in, but Dot is the limit. I'm glad they've gone to Maine. I'd rather have you than all the rest of the bunch."

The artless comment fell sweetly on Elizabeth's sore heart and injured pride. She reciprocated by ordering delicacies for Billy's evening meal.

"I don't feel so very hungry," he admitted. "I guess I'll go to bed."

"I would," said Elizabeth, dismissing him with a pat on the rough head. "Take a hot bath, Billy; do, and you'll sleep like a top. I'm coming up before long."

Billy blundered up-stairs, already half asleep, took the prescribed bath—but didn't wash his face—and tumbled into bed.

About midnight Elizabeth was aroused by an unusual sound. Startled into full wakefulness, she presently identified it as of human nature and proceeding from Billy's room. Slipping into kimono and sandals, she ran down the hall to find her young brother groaning in pain.

"I'm dying," he gasped. "I'm dying, Bess, I tell you. Oh! Oh!"

Elizabeth procured hot water, peppermint, brandy, none of which assuaged Billy's pangs, occurring with increasing frequency and violence.

"Miss Bess, you'd better call the doctor," said the white-faced cook, who, with two other scared maids, had heard Billy's groans and come to offer help.

Elizabeth herself thought so. This was no ordinary stomach-ache. Billy's face was white under its coat of tan, he was feverish and yet the cold perspiration stood on his freckled forehead. Be-

tween spasms of pain he fell exhausted on his pillow. Elizabeth ran down to the telephone.

"Dr. Utter is out on an important case," said the wife of their family practitioner. "You might try Dr. Lewis."

Dr. Lewis was reported on his vacation and Elizabeth knew no other physician of reputation. She appealed to Central.

"I'll call Dr. Jones," said the operator. "He's pretty good."

Dr. Jones was out of town. "Have you tried that new man who has just come to Freeport?" inquired Central, moved from her usual impersonality by Elizabeth's need and her dilemma. "Dr. Russell?"

"No," said Elizabeth. "I thought he hadn't begun to practise."

"He'd surely come for an emergency and he's right next door to you. Shall I ring him?"

"Yes," said Elizabeth, taking a sudden resolve. Dot might laugh at her and think her doing it purposely; Dr. Russell might consider her what he chose, but Billy was in terrible pain and she could get no one else to help her.

The receiver at the other end was taken down almost immediately and a pleasant voice said: "This is Amory Russell."

"I am Elizabeth Emerson, Dr. Russell, and

Billy, my brother, is dreadfully sick. I'm alone with him, and our own doctor is out and I've tried for two others. I know you aren't practising yet, but will you ——”

Dr. Russell did not wait for her to finish the sentence. “I'll be with you in five minutes, Miss Emerson,” and back went the receiver.

Elizabeth hung up hers and dropped into a hall chair, shivering and frightened. Even there she could hear the sounds of Billy's woe.

Though her distress was keen and every moment seemed an eternity, she realized that Dr. Russell arrived very quickly and yet was fully dressed, causing Elizabeth, as she admitted him, to become suddenly conscious of her blue silk negligée, her bare feet thrust into straw sandals, her hair in two heavy braids. But there was not the slightest indication in Dr. Russell's face that her attire was in the least unusual.

“What is it?” he asked at once.

“Billy went on a picnic. I suppose he overate.”

“Probably too much picnic. Up-stairs?”

Elizabeth nodded and followed him. At the landing he turned in the direction of the one lighted room. The cook and maids withdrew, being less dressed than Elizabeth.

Dr. Russell put down the little black case he car-

ried, gave one look at Billy, took off his coat, turned back his cuffs and went to work. So far as Elizabeth was concerned, she might have been merely an automaton to do his bidding, but between them they spent a crowded hour. Elizabeth ceased to think of her attire, or rather her lack of it, for the doctor never withdrew his attention from Billy. And how sure and certain every motion was, how gentle his touch, how sympathetic his tone when Billy, worn out with pain, dissolved into helpless tears.

“Buck up for a few minutes longer,” he said cheerily. “You’re better, Billy; you’re better, only you don’t know it yet.”

At this, Billy smiled through sobs. The prophecy proved correct, for just as the first waking birds announced the summer dawn, Billy lay pale and exhausted, shaken from head to foot, but free from pain and from further cause for pain.

“And now, Billy,” said Dr. Russell, leaning back in a relaxed attitude, “tell me what you ate on your picnic.”

“Cherries,” said Billy, “clams, a lobster, cucumbers, hot-dogs, lemon-pie, pickles, watermelon, ginger-ale,—I forgot the rest.”

“You’ve remembered quite enough!” said Dr. Russell, looking at Elizabeth with a laugh in his eyes. The look was so friendly, so full of fun, and yet so utterly unconscious of anything unconven-

tional in the situation that she smiled back with equal frankness.

"You remind me, Billy, of an occasion when three small boys picnicked on Clam Island and dined not wisely but too well. I recall that my aunt and uncle sat up with me most of the night."

"I came pretty near croaking, didn't I?" asked Billy, luxuriating in his misery, now it was past.

"Oh, I wasn't afraid of that," said Dr. Russell calmly. "I was only afraid you would tie yourself into such hard knots that I couldn't straighten you out."

Billy laughed. "It must be funny to be a doctor and hear people squeal," he said. "And you were at the front in France, weren't you? I'll bet you had a bully good time."

A rather odd expression crossed Dr. Russell's face as he fitted a tiny bottle into its proper place in the black bag.

"It wasn't my idea of a bully good time," he said rather gravely. "You haven't really been enjoying yourself these past two hours, have you? Well, in France, I sometimes worked for hours at a stretch, helping one boy after another, without a break between, and every one of them was in mortal pain. It isn't easy to see people suffer, and the amount we could do to help was only a drop in the bucket. It

wasn't uncommon for a surgeon to keep on till he dropped where he stood."

"Gee!" said the astonished Billy. "I didn't know it was like that. Did you ever keel over?"

"Once."

"What did they do with you?"

"Shoved me one side and went on working. Nobody had time to waste on a man who merely fainted. Now, Billy, I want you to go to sleep. Keep covered and don't get up till your sister says you may."

"I want you to come and see me again," announced the invalid.

"You don't need me," said the young doctor laughingly. "You'll be perfectly all right when you wake except for feeling weak. You're not going to disintegrate while you sleep."

"I know it, but I want you to come again. Eve, tell him he's to come."

"Why, if it isn't necessary, we oughtn't to bother him," began Elizabeth, somewhat surprised by a sudden look the doctor divided between her and her brother.

"Oh, I'll drop in for a friendly call, Billy, if that is all you want," he said pleasantly. "And when you are round again, I'll show you a specimen of what I consider a bully good time, a spin in the *Whitewing*. On a nice breezy day, with the right

people aboard, that's the best fun I know. Don't bother to come down-stairs, Miss Emerson; I'll let myself out."

"I was sorry to trouble you," said Elizabeth, following him into the hall, "but I didn't know what to do. I'm immensely indebted to you."

"You needn't be. Billy really needed help and you were entirely justified in calling a physician. I am glad to have been of service."

"I hope the telephone didn't wake your aunt."

"I don't think Aunt Eunice heard it. I have had an extension put on and when I go up at night, I arrange it so the bell rings only in my own room. She may possibly have heard me go out, but I don't think she did. I hope you will get some rest yourself now; you must need it. Good-night, or rather, good-morning."

Amory returned to his own premises but did not at once enter the house. Instead he walked slowly on the brick paths among the flowers and the wakening birds, smoking and watching the dawn come over the harbor, gray and pearly at first, with ever-increasing color and loveliness, but his thoughts were not wholly on the sunrise.

"Billy certainly called her Eve," he said to himself. "Was that name Eve or Phebe? Which of those two girls was the one in the booth? And am

I really so foolish as to think it matters either way?"

When he went in, the house was still dark, for there the early dawn had not penetrated. As Amory passed the open door of the east parlor, his attention was for a second arrested by two peculiar dots of light which seemed to focus themselves upon his consciousness. He stopped for another glance.

"That's curious," he thought. "I must have looked at that dragon thousands of times after dark, but I had forgotten that its eyes were luminous. Strange, too, for that seems a thing that would stick in a youngster's mind. Odd that those old craftsmen knew how to produce an effect like the radium of to-day."

A little later, Elizabeth, leaving the now sleeping Billy, heard the creak of cordage from the direction of the harbor. Crossing the hall to her father's room, she saw the *Whitewing* silently slipping out into the sunrise sea.

CHAPTER XI

IN WHICH AMORY BREAKS A GLASS SHADE

WHEN Mr. Emerson returned from his trip to New York he found Billy still white and subdued from his racking experience, and Elizabeth yet feeling the effect of the strain.

“It was mighty lucky you could get Dr. Russell,” he observed. “Billy, you young idiot, didn’t you know better than to eat all that truck at one sitting?”

“I know better now,” acknowledged Billy. “Dr. Russell is a brick, Dad. Let’s have him always instead of that porcupine of an Utter.”

“I don’t see why Dr. Utter deserves that epithet,” began his father, but stopped at Elizabeth’s laugh. Billy had precisely hit off the pompadour with which the fussy little doctor ornamented his head.

“Pretty tough on you, Bess,” Mr. Emerson went on. “I think I’ll call on that young man and thank him for coming to your help when he really hasn’t put out his shingle.”

“It’s going out next week,” volunteered Billy. “He said the alterations in the house were done,

and he might as well put it out, though he doesn't expect to be very busy. I guess he doesn't want to be," Billy added, "because he said he meant to sail and loaf all he liked until September."

The "shingle" in question went up in the shape of a modest brass plate on the gate of Journey's End and an equally small and inconspicuous one on its door. Neither met with Lydia's approval.

"No one will see that sign, Amory," she announced after an inspection. "Thee should have a large one like Dr. Morgan's, one which can be read half a block away."

"The people who don't like my sign may go on to Dr. Morgan," said Amory, somewhat amused, but thinking it useless to explain that the sign in itself was intended to sift approaching patients.

"Well, we shall see," sighed Lydia. "Amory, will thee kindly come into the east parlor for a moment? I would like thee to lift from the mantel that glass case which stands over the dragon. I want to dust it."

Amory complied. He had not been into the room since that early morning when he and Aunt Eunice spoke of the rugs. He carefully lifted the glass bell from above the beautifully carved ivory monster and waited while Lydia dusted both with care.

"Thee may replace the bell now," said Lydia, giving the dragon a last touch.

Amory lifted the fragile glass, raised it above the figure and to his amazement and mortification dropped it on the hearthstone where it broke into innumerable fragments.

"I could have done as well as that myself, Amory," said Lydia dryly. "Don't touch the pieces; thee will cut thyself. There, thee's already done so."

"Confound it!" said Amory under his breath.

"Thee'd better go seek a disinfectant," said Lydia. "I will fetch a brush and pan."

"I know enough to do that," said Amory curtly, and then, in his office took himself to task. It was not a large room, but attractive and fitted with every appliance and convenience he could need. Mrs. Russell had insisted upon his using some of the fine rugs his uncle had collected with such pride.

Amory attended to his cut finger and recovered his serenity during the process. "What is the matter with me?" he asked himself. "I can't expect Lydia to consider me as anything but the boy she helped bring up, and why should I be irritated by it?"

Having fastened the tiny bandage, he strolled into the room designed for his patients. Here, too,

Mrs. Russell's loving hand had been at work, and her unerring good taste showed in every article of furniture, in the simple muslin draperies and in the shimmery blue portières exactly harmonizing with the rugs on the polished floors. There were books and magazines as well as a wonderful strip of Chinese embroidery like a living flame on the gray wall. It was precisely the kind of interior that an intending patient, following the modest brass plate, might expect to find. Amory gave it an approving glance. The morrow would find him keeping his first office hours in Freeport.

"Is there another glass bell like the one in the east parlor?" he asked his aunt as he joined her in the sitting-room where a cheerful fire relieved the gloominess of a wet evening. "I lifted it off for Lydia to dust the dragon and managed to break it."

"I do not think there is," replied Mrs. Russell reflectively. "In an upper room is one which protects a fine French clock, but it is of an entirely different shape. I doubt whether that bell can easily be replaced, especially since the war. But it is of no consequence, Amory, for the dragon can go in some glass-fronted cabinet, and a less fragile article be placed where it stands."

"I'm not usually such a butter-fingers," observed her nephew, settling into a big wicker chair.

"Thee is not indeed. Even as a little boy thy hands were deft and sure. Did thee not care for that entertainment Mrs. Selby gives to-night for her young people? Thee was invited, I know."

"I didn't feel like going, Aunt Eunice."

"Elizabeth seemed to anticipate great pleasure. She telephoned me that she should wear a rose-colored frock, but because of the storm, could not show herself as she sometimes does. Thee mustn't deny thyself any youthful pleasure thee cares for, Amory. I have spent many evenings alone and can do so still."

"I have been out a good deal, thee knows, but somehow the young people are younger than they used to be," said Amory, laughing a little. "Life seems more serious to me."

"Thee has been through much that has of necessity made thee realize that," said his aunt, looking at him lovingly. "And of course Freeport is changing. There are many people here especially during the summer whom I know only by name. But thee has received many invitations since thy return home."

"More than I care to accept," said Amory, and relapsed into silence. Even had he not been a Russell of old Freeport where the Russell name held high honor, any door would have been open to so handsome and desirable a youth. The newly-

arrived summer aristocracy hastened to include him in every festivity. Invitations poured upon him and the fact that he accepted few, and those chiefly from the families whom he had always known, made his presence a sort of triumph for any hostess. Of course, Mrs. Russell herself never went to formal entertainments of any kind, had not done so since her husband's death, but young Dr. Russell was under no such obligation and yet showed himself almost indifferently exclusive in his acceptances.

Mrs. Jardine had even resorted to the telephone in her exasperation on receiving a courteous refusal to an elaborate dinner at which Doris Jardine was expected to make a serious impression. She was prepared to expostulate, to bear down any excuse which a young man pressed to a corner over a wire could make, but Mrs. Jardine was silenced when a pleasant voice politely informed her that he was dining with the Averys, in a manner of such finality that she expressed regret and hung up the receiver without having pinned him down to a definite date, as she firmly intended to do. That any one could prefer a dinner with the Averys to one with her was more than Mrs. Jardine could comprehend. True, they were of the old blue-blooded Friends of Freeport, but there were no young people in the family now that Miriam was married and

Putnam was dead, and no inducement, at least from Mrs. Jardine's point of view. For the time being she acknowledged herself worsted but resolved that as soon as Dr. Russell announced himself ready for practice Doris should consult him about her delicate digestion.

"Thee seems tired to-night, Amory," said his aunt after a pause. "I think thee feels a little strain now that thee is about to begin work in Freeport. That is but natural. Thee has seen so many sick people already that it will not be hard when the time comes."

"I don't dread it in the least and I hope nothing will come up that I cannot handle. I was merely wondering whether any difficulty will arise because it is my native town. While some may come to me just because of that, others will think a Freeport boy can't possibly be as skilful as an outsider. Thee knows all my patients up to this time have been strangers."

"I can understand that it may be easier to prescribe when thee has no personal connection with thy patient, but I think many will come to thee purely because thee is Amory Russell."

"What I should like to do," said Amory, gazing thoughtfully into the fire, "not at once of course, but eventually, is to specialize with children. I always got on with the kids in the hospitals and

they are so patient and so appreciative and loving, that they appeal to me quite as much as the grown people. I couldn't help growing fond of some of the little things in the orthopedic ward, tiny chaps with hip disease and tubercular spines. Work with them is so worth while."

"And why should thee not?" asked his aunt, laying down her sewing to look at him. "That seems to me a beautiful purpose. To relieve the suffering of the little ones is certainly a Christ-like ambition."

Amory made no reply, but his face grew less weary and became merely serious. Presently he rose and went to one of the bookcases.

"Does thee feel like reading aloud, Aunt Eunice?" he asked as he returned with a volume in a shabby leather binding. "Will thee read me *Guinevere*? I shall sit on the rug with my head against thy knee and it will be as though a dozen years were taken from my age."

"I remember how thee used to like that poem and it seemed to me odd, for there were others of the *Idylls* I would have thought to hold more appeal for a boy. Certainly I will read it, Amory; bring thy cushion and sit as thee chooses. It is curious, but during thy absence Elizabeth took a fancy that I should read to her and recalling how thee liked to hear me, I yielded."

"What did thee read?" asked Amory with some interest.

"It chanced that I was reading for my own edification the *Trojan Women* of Euripides. I had not read it for years and I cannot tell thee, Amory, what an impression that re-reading produced upon me. There, in grand and poignant language dating long before Christ, were line upon line on the wrongs and sorrows of war that depicted absolutely the sufferings of modern France and Belgium. It is true that the great literature of the world is that which holds a universal appeal, and perhaps without it, no work can endure. I read the *Trojan Women* to Elizabeth and she wept as she listened. Then, because it had stirred the deeps in us both, we turned to more modern poetry. I suggested the *Idylls*, but Elizabeth would have none of them. She said she hated Arthur—he was such a prig! Her point of view, though unusual, seemed interesting to me, for she said she could never love a man who was too perfect to be human, and that Arthur should have forgiven Guinevere in her great penitence."

"Why, he did," said Amory wonderingly. "It is of his forgiveness that we are going to read."

"But Elizabeth said it was not true forgiveness when he would not even touch her lest he sully himself,—merely held his hands above her in fare-

well blessing. I believe there is something in her criticism; Arthur might have been greater had he been more loving and human. But we did not read the *Idylls*. We read the *Burial of a Queen* and certain very recent poets. There, dear, is thee settled?"

The fire snapped before Amory's thoughtful eyes and outside poured a cold summer rain, while Eunice Russell's musical voice breathed action into the figures of the familiar poem. Even restless Caroline was always willing to listen when Aunt Eunice read aloud, and Amory's memory was stored with lines, stanzas, whole poems learned simply through the spell of her voice. To-night every word fell upon his ear with healing calm, with that keen pleasure which only the repetition of a thing dear to one's youth can bestow. Perhaps for the first time Amory consciously realized how wise and good a thing his aunt had done for him when she taught him to love the enduring beauty of fine poetry.

Guinevere drew to its close:

"Ah, my God,
What might I not have made of thy fair world,
Had I but loved thy highest creature here?
It was my duty to have loved the highest;
It surely was my profit had I known:
It would have been my pleasure had I seen.
We needs must love the highest when we see it."

A coal snapped from the fire and Amory threw it back. His mind lingered over those words and he lost a little until the close: "To where beyond these voices there is peace."

Against the shuttered panes blew wind and rain but the fire-lit room in Journey's End seemed the personification of serenity, Aunt Eunice the very embodiment of its spirit.

CHAPTER XII

IN WHICH LYDIA MEETS WITH MISFORTUNE AND AMORY PLANS A PICNIC

EXT morning dawned clear and sunny, the whole rain-washed world refreshed and rejuvenated in crisp cool air and sky and sea of equal blueness. Amory over his setting-up exercises found himself planning an hour for the *Whitewing*.

His toilet was yet at an early stage when he heard a knock on his door and his aunt's voice speaking his name.

"I'm up, Aunt Eunice," he called from the bathroom. "Isn't it a ripping morning?"

"I want thee, Amory," said Mrs. Russell. "Lydia has slipped on the polished floor and hurt her wrist and hand. Come as soon as thee is presentable; do not stop to shave nor to dress fully, for she is in great pain."

"I'll come in one moment," Amory replied.

He found Lydia seated on the couch in the sitting-room, her face white and her right arm laid upon a pillow placed on her knee.

"Well, Lydia, what has thee been doing?" asked Amory, who appeared in shirt and trousers, with hair wet and rumpled.

"After walking on the polished floors of Journey's End these many years, I slipped on a rug. Thee can try thy skill at curing me."

Amory was touching the injured arm with deft, gentle fingers. It was already badly swollen.

"I have at least sprained my wrist," said Lydia watching him.

"More than that; thee has broken thy little finger."

At this statement Lydia's disgust knew no bounds.

"I find it hard to believe thee, Amory Russell. If thee is merely up to thy old tricks of teasing, thee will find me still capable of boxing thy ears."

Amory laughed at her indignation. "I don't blame thee for suspecting me, Lydia, but thee'll have to believe me. Tough lines for such a trivial slip. Aunt Eunice, is there any ice?"

"Plenty, dear," said Mrs. Russell, who stood looking anxiously on.

Lydia sat in grim silence while Amory visited the refrigerator and gave the injured wrist and hand careful treatment.

"A simple remedy," she observed, "and yet it is

lessening the pain. Thee may be right about my finger, Amory; something is not as it was."

"It really is broken, Lydia, and I cannot set it until the swelling is reduced. Now keep thy whole forearm immersed in this basin while I bring a splint and bandage."

"This is a pretty to-do, Eunice Russell," sighed Lydia when her hand, in neat white folds, reposed in a sling. "Here am I helpless, and preserving-time upon us. Amory, this was really thy fault, for had thee not broken the glass bell last night, I should not have broken my finger this morning. I recalled that the ivory dragon was left exposed to the dust and went to shut it into a cabinet. Just as I stepped on the rug before the mantel it slipped under my foot and I fell. How *will* thee manage, Eunice?"

"We shall get on somehow," said Mrs. Russell, smoothing back the gray hair of the faithful old servant. "Bertha will be here soon, thee knows, and with her the girl Bell, whom I have engaged for Amory's service. I have found the negroes ever kind-hearted when one is in need, and they will prove no exception. Thee must not worry, Lydia. The only thing that concerns me is thy pain."

Lydia wiped away a tear. "How long must I keep my arm thus?" she asked of Amory.

"Thee may not need the sling for long, but thee

must keep thy hand in splints for perhaps three weeks."

"The jam!" sighed Lydia, "and the peas and cherries ready to can."

"Thee can direct Bertha and I have not lost my skill at such arts," said Mrs. Russell soothingly.

"What must be must be," sighed Lydia, "but I shall not stay to add to thy cares, Eunice Russell. If I cannot be of help, at least I will not hinder, and I will not have thee waiting on me. I can go to my sister's."

"For many years thy hands have served me and mine, Lydia. Do not begrudge me the slight return of helping thee. There, Amory has brought thee some coffee."

"Drink and cheer up," said Amory. "Aunt Eunice and I can get on and thee can bet thy boots, Lydia, that I won't let her overdo. We will take our meals at the Freeport Inn if Bertha and Bell both desert us. Thee, too, Lydia. As for the peas and cherries, why can't I cook 'em and stick 'em into jars? Thee should see me bottle germs in a laboratory."

"Nevertheless I shouldn't like to let thee loose in my kitchen," said Lydia with a suspicion of a smile. "But I thank thee for thy help, Amory. Eunice, breakfast was ready for serving when I met with my accident."

Amory finished dressing and came down just as the postman brought the early mail. Among the letters was one from his sister which he thrust unopened into a pocket. Caroline's letters were liable to be exotic both in contents and in language and he usually read them in private before sharing with his aunt. Yet, to do Caroline justice, when she wrote to Mrs. Russell directly, she did so with consideration.

In the course of the morning, Amory read the letter. The first part was a brief summary of engagements that had occupied Caroline for a fortnight past and then came something which her brother read with more attention.

"We have had the most entrancing week-end guest, Yin Luk of the Chinese Legation. Imagine a dapper little cherub five feet tall with a face as smooth as a baby's and slanting black eyes. His taste in clothes was perfect and I fell in love with him at once."

Amory's lip curled slightly but he was used to Caroline's extravagant statements and read on.

"Yin reciprocated and we sat on the stairs during three dances. Chinese love-making is interesting, for Orientals are so subtle. Yin could give young America points—he gave me some. He speaks French better than English and we had no difficulty in understanding each other.

"Sunday morning everybody was playing bridge and I chanced to have on that jade pendant Aunt Eunice gave me. When my little Chinaman saw it, his eyes stuck out of his head and he became so excited that he could only stutter. He begged me to let him examine it.

"Well, Amory, as nearly as I could understand, that pendant is something unique. It is as old as creation to begin with and it appears that it was made by a Chinese magician to subdue an evil spirit which he had previously created. How Yin got all this information I can't tell, but he reeled it off glibly when he once got his breath. It seems that it was rather a fad with the wizards of Egypt and the orient to call up a demon and then tame it by making an amulet to keep it under control. Quaint diversion, *n'est-ce pas?* Then the old sorcerers would pass on to their reward and leave behind them the evil they had created, very likely without telling anybody about the controlling charm.

"According to Yin, my amulet is one of these, and somewhere in the world is the spirit it bosses. I can imagine just how your lip is curling, Amory. It's a bad habit and unbecoming as well.

"Yin got into such a state that I tried to calm him by telling him Journey's End was full of oriental plunder, but that sent him into a condition where he could speak only Chinese. I held his hand

and fanned him and finally dismissed him happy with a letter of introduction to you. Show him all the stuff like a dear boy; he'll probably arrive on the heels of this letter or maybe before it. I've told him you're not a bit like me, much better-looking and not at all frivolous and that he mustn't shock you.

"How's the practice? Have you met *her* yet and doesn't she part her hair in the middle? Love to dear Aunt Eunice and don't disapprove of me any more than you can help.

"CAROL."

Amory read this epistle twice and Caroline's warning about his lip was needed. Not until mid-afternoon did he speak of the letter to his aunt, whom he found, as usual in pleasant weather, upon the terrace.

"Dear, I have been waiting anxiously," she began, her cheeks flushed with excitement. "We have listened eagerly to the sound of the bell, and after admitting each patient, Bell has returned to tell me. Is thee not pleased to have six on thy first day?"

"A good beginning, Aunt Eunice," said Amory smiling, "very good indeed. And that does not include Lydia."

"Lydia has gone to her sister. I could do noth-

ing with her; she said she would not stay to be dependent on my help and she would accept no aid from either Bertha or Bell. Her thought was wholly for me, but I am sorry she has gone."

"But I want to keep an eye on her hand," said Amory.

"She realized that and said she should come daily after breakfast to direct the household matters, but she would not remain to need help about her dressing and eating. Were thy patients interesting?"

"Mumps," said Amory concisely; "a boy with an infected finger which should have had attention before; a lady with a tiny cyst to be removed from her eyelid; a burned hand, a poor working-woman with gall-stones and six small children; a little chap with a twisted knee."

"The poor woman —" began his aunt. "Amory, thee must let me help those who need financial assistance."

"She will have to go to Boston for an operation and I can arrange for a free bed without cost to her. I knew thee would hope for a new field for thy charities."

"I have always thought fruitful channels would be opened to me should thee practise where I could know of thy patients. Robert so willingly assisted the poor and I try to do likewise. During the war

John Howland remonstrated with me gently, fearing that I did harm by indiscriminate giving. I was grieved when he convinced me that I had in truth given to impostors masquerading in the name of a good cause, so I submitted to his courteously expressed desire that I should give no large sums without first consulting him. Then the poor woman will be cared for? What of the child with the twisted knee?"

"His was the most interesting case. They are not poor people and his weakness is curable if his mother will do her part in corrective gymnastics and strict obedience to orders. I hope she has backbone enough to do it. He was a dear little fellow and I don't want him lame for life. I had a letter from Caroline, Aunt Eunice. She was swamped with company as usual, but wrote to say she had given a letter of introduction to some young Chinese official connected with the Legation. She thought he would be interested in our oriental things. Her letter was dated three days ago, so he may turn up any time."

"He will be welcome," said Mrs. Russell serenely. "I have at different times entertained a number of Chinese gentlemen and I always found them interesting and courteous guests. Thee is looking longingly at the harbor and no wonder. The afternoon is too pretty to spend on shore."

"I know it," said Amory. "I want to set foot on Clam Island again. Would thee care to sail so far?"

"Not so far as that. While I enjoy the *White-wing*, I tire more quickly than in the past. Why does thee not ask Phebe to go with thee again?"

"Phebe doesn't really like sailing; she only thinks she does."

"Why, she seemed most enthusiastic when thee took her the other day," commented Mrs. Russell, genuinely surprised at this statement. "Her pleasure appeared sincere."

Amory smiled to himself. Phebe had liked the invitation and would doubtless jump at the chance to go again, but somehow she had not fitted into his morning.

"Phebe hasn't a light foot in a boat," he said lazily. "She fell over the centreboard case and became mixed in ropes at critical moments and needed more assistance than I could well give her. Oh, no, she was not at all seasick, not even uncomfortable. She thought the wind in the cordage made a dismal wail and that jelly-fish were messy animals and cluttered up the waves."

"Thee cannot expect every one to enjoy sailing as thee does," said his aunt, smiling in spite of a sudden and secret disappointment. "Thee comes

of the old seafaring Russells and the call is in thy blood."

"Just because I enjoy it so much I know when others do not. Phebe may be in her element on shore, but she does not belong in a boat."

"I remember how thee would always classify people as 'belonging' or not, according as thee found them congenial. I am sorry Phebe failed to meet thy requirements."

"Why, does thee *wish* me to take her again?" asked Amory so quickly that Mrs. Russell realized his suspicion.

"Not at all, dear," she replied, keeping her gaze on her needlework. "I was merely suggesting a companion, since I do not feel equal to so long a sail. But perhaps thee has some one in mind."

"I have," said her nephew promptly and yet watching her with a quizzical smile. "The day when I took thee and Elizabeth Emerson, she truly enjoyed herself. She looked up at the rigging and heard the song; her eyes widened with pleasure when I sailed close to the wind, as I purposely did, and she didn't squeal when the lee gunwale dipped under. She saw how wonderful are the colors in a school of jelly-fish and said they looked like a rainbow dissolved in the sea. She lifted one or two out on the palm of her hand and looked at them

thoughtfully, and when she put them back, it was with consideration lest they be hurt by the current and the motion of the boat. Does thee think she would consider me very fresh if I telephone and ask her to go to Clam with me?"

"No, dear," said Mrs. Russell, after a pause so slight that Amory could not have detected it had he been watching less closely. "Elizabeth would not think thee presuming and thee would find her a pleasant comrade."

"Thee has used the very word that means all the difference," said Amory laughingly. "Phebe was well enough as a companion, but not as a comrade. Perhaps I am mistaken in Miss Emerson—I haven't seen much of her,—but in every encounter so far she has fitted into the situation, whatever it was. I have seen her twice here in the garden, where she seemed a part of it, and once by her brother's bedside, where she was self-effacing and helpful, and that afternoon on the boat. I am inclined to think she would like the rain drumming on the canvas and fog creeping in like a ghost; she might even pass the supreme test for a child of the sea,—to get thoroughly wet and horribly dirty and ravenously hungry and yet have a glorious good time. And I want to buy some lobsters and cook 'em on the rocks and not come home till the moon rises. Will Elizabeth Emerson stand for all that

and does thee think it will be safe for us to do it unchaperoned?" he ended wickedly.

"Very safe," agreed his aunt unexpectedly. "I, too, observed Elizabeth the other day and I saw that she was more interested in thy boat than in thee."

Amory laughed in delight. "Oh, Aunt Eunice!" he exclaimed. "Thee is quite right—she was.

"But this afternoon," he added to himself, "she is going to be interested in both."

Mrs. Russell may have guessed the thought he did not speak, but was too wise to make any comment or to betray the vague uneasiness she felt. She laid aside her sewing.

"Go telephone Elizabeth and be sure to tell her to take a heavy wrap, for the wind is fresh. Thee must not sup on lobsters alone; I will bid Bertha cut thee some sandwiches."

"Plain bread and butter, please, and some of those fat little stuffed melon pickles with their hats stuck on with straws."

"Mangoes, thee means? I will see whether Lydia has any on hand."

Mrs. Russell went into the house and after a moment Amory followed. The smile yet lingered about his lips as he took down the telephone receiver.

CHAPTER XIII

IN WHICH AMORY AND ELIZABETH GO SAILING AND SOMETHING MYSTERIOUS HAPPENS

CLAM ISLAND marked the farthest boundary of Freeport harbor. On the side toward the town two long sandy points ran out, enclosing a sheltered inlet where a boat might safely be left. On the seaward side the formation was entirely different and the Atlantic rollers broke on a rocky shore. Parties often picnicked on Clam, but no one camped over-night, for there was no water. Had it not been for this defect, some enterprising man might have secured the little island for his summer home, since in situation it was ideal.

"I believe we can make Green Island on a single tack," said Amory, as the *Whitewing* dropped her mooring and moved seaward in stately beauty, this time with a tender trailing behind. "Good-bye, Aunt Eunice," he called. "Don't worry if we get becalmed."

"Not that there is any danger of this wind dropping," he added, as Elizabeth waved her handkerchief to the slender gray figure on the sea-wall of Journey's End, "but I never go sailing without

thinking of a scrape Tom Howland and I got into once. Tom had an uncle who was an Episcopal bishop, and he came to conduct a funeral here in Freeport. He arrived the night before and in the morning Tom and I took him sailing and we went out beyond Clam and were becalmed."

Elizabeth was smiling sympathetically at the fun in her companion's voice and eyes. "What happened?" she asked.

"Nothing. That was the point. We had left the tender at the mooring and there was nothing our ecclesiastical guest *could* do. He didn't exactly hold Tom and me to account for his predicament, but we received the impression that he had seen all he wished of us for some time to come. Oh, he took it pretty well on the whole, but they had to delay the funeral. The Howlands realized what had probably happened and sent a launch after us, so he arrived about three-quarters of an hour late. I fancy his cassock concealed some deficiencies of toilet."

"It must have been fun to be a boy in Freeport," said Elizabeth, who was feeling perfectly at home with Dr. Russell. There was a quiet friendliness in his manner which took everything for granted and made it seem as though they had known each other a long time. There was a certain direct simplicity as well, a quality she had already appreci-

ated in Aunt Eunice. She liked, too, the smile that kept flashing into his gray eyes even when his lips were grave. She had seen him working with cheery patience over the pain-stricken Billy; this was a different but equally attractive phase.

"It was fun," said Amory. "I think no boy ever had a better time than I did, growing up here with the sea and the dunes to play with."

He had arranged the sheet and tiller to his satisfaction and, as he spoke, glanced critically at the sails.

"Just enough wind to make the jib count," he commented, and then drew from his pocket his cigarette case. "May I?" he asked, with a smile.

"Of course. I don't object anyway and I am sitting to windward." Elizabeth spoke seriously but smiled as he went on.

"You are remembering your impertinent remark when we met in the garden and you knew me and wouldn't tell me who you were. I will be impertinent in return. Won't you join me?"

"No, thanks," said Elizabeth, rather stiffly.

Amory bit his lip to keep from laughing. Elizabeth had surely learned her lesson.

"I used to do it," she admitted frankly, "but I shocked your Aunt Eunice once, and somehow she cured me of wanting to smoke. Really, doesn't she mind your doing it?"

"No," said Amory, liking her all the better for this acknowledgment. "She doesn't object, but she wouldn't like a girl to smoke. She and Uncle Robert were always broad-minded. They permitted me to do most of the things I wanted when I was growing up. I was allowed to go to parties and to dances and to do practically everything the other boys did except play cards. Of course, I did that when I went away to school," he added with a twinkle. "When I was fifteen Uncle gave me the *Whitewing*."

Amory threw one knee over the tiller while he lighted his cigarette.

"That smells awfully good," Elizabeth commented abruptly. "I love the odor of nice tobacco."

His eyes brimming with amusement, Amory again proffered her his case.

"You needn't tempt me," she said, laughing. "I promised I wouldn't."

"Then far be it from me to tempt you. I will even throw mine overboard if you say the word."

"I'm not so silly. Go on—you started to tell me about your boat."

"Oh," said Amory. "Yes—the *Whitewing*. Nobody ever had more fun with a boat than Tom and Putnam Avery and I. Perhaps you know they

didn't come back from France? It's odd, but several times when I have been sailing alone, especially the first time I went, and that early morning when I sailed into the sunrise after Billy was sick,—on both those occasions I felt so strongly that they were with me. The sense of their presence was so intense that it seemed as though I must *see* them the next minute. And the wonderful part was that both were so happy that they made me feel so too. It was as though Put said in so many words: 'Nothing ails us, brother; joyous souls are we.' I understood that he and Tom were radiantly alive and still close to me in sympathy and I came back knowing that I should never feel lonely or sad in the *Whitewing*."

"That was a lovely experience," said Elizabeth softly. "Aunt Eunice has told me how you three grew up together."

"Yes," said Amory, and for a time was silent, a little amazed at the sudden impulse which had led him to make so intimate a confidence to one whom he knew so slightly.

Elizabeth was silent also. The *Whitewing* was running before a breeze which keeled her over till the water swept her gunwale. One wave had even slapped over and Amory eased her up a bit. Freeport had dropped behind and they seemed alone in a wide expanse of blue. It was too early for the

fishing-boats to be making harbor; too late for lobster-men.

Elizabeth sat with happy eyes watching the waves, her hair blown forward by the following wind. Hers was not the sort of hair which looks untidy when it straggles, for the salt air curled it slightly into clinging tendrils. She sat like a little child with one foot tucked under her and the other swinging.

"Do you know, Miss Emerson," said her companion after the pause, "I still feel so sure that I met you before coming to Freeport. Did you by any chance happen to be in Providence during June and did you attend a Venetian carnival some church was giving for the Red Cross?"

Elizabeth turned her head as though it had been moved mechanically. "Then it *was* you!" she exclaimed irrelevantly.

"Now you are one ahead of me," announced Amory, "unless you mean exactly what I do, the Last of the D'Estes and the black-draped booth."

Her lips slightly parted, Elizabeth sat staring at him.

"It was *you* who came into the booth when Jim Chadwick and I were having our palms read?"

"Thinking it a public place, I entered and find-

ing two absolute strangers present I did not appreciate my actual rudeness in remaining."

"You heard what the palmist said to me?" demanded Elizabeth.

"Yes," said Amory. "She gave you a pretty good character on the whole! But did you place any faith in the prophetic part of it?"

"Well, no. At least none of it has happened yet. What she said about the past and about me may have been true, but nothing seems to be doing as to the future."

"Do you know anything about the palmist herself?"

"Yes. The Chadwicks knew about her. I was staying with them at Bristol and we motored up for that entertainment. They say she really does have some strange power of mind-reading or something like that. I forget her name, but her husband is rather an important man in Providence. She isn't a professional and she never reads palms except for charity. I heard that lots of the things she foretells do happen, and it rather dismays her. Did she tell you anything that has come true? I didn't hear what she said to you."

"She told me immediately that I was a doctor, and I am puzzled to understand how she guessed. I am quite sure there was no odor of disinfectant from which she might have deduced it. That cer-

tainly was a straight hit. She gave me some advice, which I do not believe I have followed, and warned me of an indefinite danger."

Amory hesitated. He did not know his companion sufficiently well to tell her the whole of that prophecy. At present he was satisfied to settle the identity of the girl.

"Of course it was you," he said. "I have been blind not to recognize you before, but evening dress and artificial light make a difference. You wore a blue gown trimmed with beaded embroidery and your companion called you Eve. I noticed that Billy used that name."

"Yes, from my initials, Elizabeth Vernon Emerson. My dress was blue. But how odd that was! We were two perfect strangers and only caught a glimpse of each other, yet it was enough to give us both a sense of familiarity when we met again."

"In a different town, under different circumstances. But I wasn't sure. At first I thought it was Phebe Ames, for her own home is in Providence and she said she had been helping with an entertainment her church had just given."

"But don't you know her well?" asked Elizabeth in surprise.

"We knew each other as children, but that was all. The other day Phebe and her grandmother came to call on Aunt Eunice and I asked Phebe

about the carnival and ascertained that she had not visited the palmist. No, she had grown out of my recollection until we saw each other at First Day meeting."

"I have never attended a Friends' meeting," observed Elizabeth. "Aunt Eunice has invited me, but I was afraid to come."

"What is there to fear? The only danger is of being bored because *nothing* happens. To be sure there are sometimes compensations."

He laughed and told her the story of Sarah Swain. "Had I been younger I should have let that caterpillar alone and thereby got myself into disgrace. Thanks to Phebe, who saw the danger, Sarah never knew what she escaped. We have made Green Island as I hoped on a single tack. I shall have to come about now."

Elizabeth dived under the boom as it swung across and presently they were moving much more slowly on another tack, headed now for Clam.

"Why didn't you take the palmist's advice?" she asked rather saucily. "Didn't you put any faith in it?"

Her companion smiled but made no immediate reply.

"Don't tell me if I have no business to know," said Elizabeth, noticing the pause.

"I was just wondering how to put it into words,"

began Amory, liking her for this straightforward speech. "No, I didn't have any especial faith in it. The advice she gave me was to make no important decision without thinking three times and consulting my head as well as my heart. I have made a very important decision, to stay in Freeport rather than accept a hospital position. I did what I thought right, but it was wholly the judgment of my heart."

"Because Aunt Eunice needs you?" asked Elizabeth. She was looking directly at him and her gaze was as simple and clear as that of a child.

"I will tell you something no one else must know, Miss Emerson," said Amory as simply. "I do not think Aunt Eunice has many years to live. I owe her a great deal and it seems my duty to stay in Freeport."

"Of course it is," agreed Elizabeth. Her tone indicated that there could be no possible alternative and Amory gave her a keen glance.

Neither of them spoke for a time and Clam drew steadily nearer. The shadows were becoming longer and the light more level. Presently the *Whitewing* headed into the little bay and Amory dropped his anchor.

"Let us hope our anchor will not drag," he said as he lowered the sail. "This needn't be furled, but I will make fast the jib.

"Now for the other side of Clam," he went on as he pulled the tender up the beach and Elizabeth skipped out without assistance. "There is one crevice made purposely to boil lobsters."

Elizabeth took the basket of lunch while Amory carried the thermos bottles and the lobsters in an iron kettle.

"Oh, what a wonderful place!" she sighed as they topped the slight crest of the small island and came out on a wide view of ocean. Several schooners were coasting from Maine and just above the horizon a line of smoke showed where a steamer lay hull down. Elizabeth dropped the basket to raise her arms in a sort of invocation.

"You would like the dunes," said Amory, noticing it.

"*Like* them? I love them! I can spend whole days on them."

"Alone?" asked Amory.

"Preferably alone!" declared Elizabeth, looking at him with a laugh. Her companion laughed back and held out a hand with an engaging gesture of comradeship.

"'We be of one blood, ye and I!'" he quoted as she gave him hers. "The dunes call me just as does the sea. Sometime I will show you a part not often visited. Now the first thing is some driftwood."

Elizabeth gathered wood happily and watched while Amory built a small fire in the cleft of two rocks, placing above it a kettle of water. Then they tended the fire, no small task, for like all watched pots theirs took long to boil.

"I am expecting you to eat two lobsters," said Amory, plunging them in.

"Are you drumming up practice?" asked Elizabeth merrily. "That sounds suspiciously like it."

"No, I'll warrant the digestibility of my lobsters and Aunt Eunice has edited the rest of the lunch."

"I never ate any so delicious," admitted Elizabeth half an hour later when the lobsters had been cooled in another kettle of water, cracked with stones and eaten from their shells.

"More bread and butter?" asked Amory. "Let me see—we are permitted both cake and cookies. Have some more lemonade?"

"Just a little," said Elizabeth, holding out her cup. "Do you often come here to picnic?"

"We used to come very frequently. Uncle Robert was fond of the place and he would come with me. It is a little farther than Aunt Eunice likes, especially now that she tires easily."

They finished their meal and Elizabeth helped collect the lobster shells and throw them off a projecting rock into deep water. "Why, is that the

moon?" she exclaimed. "Where *has* the afternoon gone?"

"Where it always goes when one is having a good time. We shall have to beat against the wind going home, so perhaps we'd better start."

On the crest of the island Elizabeth turned to look back. Amory, a little in advance, turned also to see her making the same gesture in farewell. There was something so unconscious and at the same time so appealing in the girlish figure that he smiled in sympathy.

"Would you like to steer?" he asked when the *Whitewing* was well on her first leg for Freeport.

Elizabeth accepted eagerly and under his direction sailed the boat home. She made a pretty picture with feet braced, her slender hands occupied with sheet and tiller, hair blowing about her earnest face. She was completely absorbed in her occupation, taken up with the momentous importance of every necessary shift, requesting an explanation for every order from her companion. At this stage of the sail Amory could not flatter himself that she gave him personally any thought at all.

"Good work!" he commented briefly when she made the mooring so cleverly that he picked it up at the first trial. "And there is Aunt Eunice waiting for us."

Mrs. Russell came down the sea-wall steps and

crossed the beach to meet the incoming tender. "Did you have a nice time, children?" she asked.

"Perfectly bully!" said Elizabeth, kissing her impulsively. "I wish you had been with us to enjoy it, too."

"I am glad to see thee back," went on Mrs. Russell. "Not that I have worried, but, Amory, I have had such a strange experience during thy absence, such a startling one, and I am so relieved that thee has come."

"Why, what has happened?" asked Amory, himself startled by the unwonted agitation she displayed. "What is wrong, Aunt Eunice?"

"I do not know, Amory. Thee told me Caroline had given a letter of introduction to a young Chinese gentleman who wished to visit Journey's End. An hour or so after thee and Elizabeth had gone he came. Bell brought the letter to me on the terrace and said she had shown him into the east parlor. The letter was directed to thee, but knowing what it was, I opened it that I might speak his name correctly when I greeted him. I delayed perhaps three minutes in reading the letter and then I went to the east parlor. Thee can imagine my astonishment to find he was not there!"

"Not there?" repeated her nephew. "Bell is new to the house; had she not misnamed the room?"

"She had not, Amory, and this is what is strange. There on a chair lay a straw hat and a cane and gloves, but the man himself was gone. And I had not been over three minutes."

Amory muttered something under his breath. "Caroline ought to be careful whom she sends here," he said aloud. "What did thee do?"

"I was startled, Amory; I was very much startled. I looked into the west rooms and they were empty. I looked into thy rooms and he was not there. The house was absolutely still and the strangeness of the happening struck me very forcibly.

"I thought a moment and I was afraid that the man might not be what Caroline supposed and that he was in hiding somewhere in Journey's End. I considered what to do and then I went to the gate and asked a passing child to call to me the policeman who patrols our district. Fortunately I had seen him go by as I came from the garden. He came to me at once and when I told my story he sent for another man and together they searched the whole house. But the Chinese was not there."

"Probably he just went away," said Amory consolingly, though his face was grave.

"But why should he leave his hat and cane behind him?"

"I don't know. Didn't Bell see him go?"

"I did not wish to frighten her so I merely asked her if she saw him leave and she said not. Bertha had already gone, so I sent Bell into the garden lest she encounter the officers."

"Elizabeth," said Amory suddenly, "will you come up to the house and stay with Aunt Eunice while I telephone the police?"

"Of course I will," said Elizabeth, hardly noticing in her agitation and concern that he had spoken to her by her given name.

"I must confess that I would not be alone just now," said Mrs. Russell wearily.

"I wish I had been here, Aunt Eunice," said Amory affectionately. "I would have spared thee this. I must learn how and when that Chinese person left Freeport. Did thee find that he had taken anything from the house?"

"In my hasty inspection I noticed nothing missing. He had taken not even his own property."

Amory supported his aunt as they went up through the garden and looked keenly at her as she sank into an armchair in the west sitting-room where Elizabeth took a stool at her feet. Then he shut off the down-stairs telephone and went to the instrument in his own room. He was gone for some time and the two did not talk. Mrs. Russell sat with head thrown back and eyes closed, and

Elizabeth softly stroked the transparent hand she held.

"Amory is long," said Mrs. Russell at last. "I feel more composed now, Elizabeth. It is unlike me to be troubled over a small thing, but this came so suddenly and so strangely that it quite upset me. And perhaps, too, I am cowardly now that Amory is at home. During his long stay in France I was forced to carry my own burdens and it is so sweet and so easy now to transfer them to his willing shoulders. Thy father will not worry over thy prolonged absence?"

"He is at the club, Aunt Eunice. When I told him I was going sailing he said he should not be home before eleven. It is not yet ten. Have both the maids gone?"

"That troubles me also, Elizabeth. Thee knows that Lydia went to her sister's home because of her injured hand. Bertha has never slept in the house but comes each morning. I expected Bell to sleep here, but to-night she said she had changed her plans and wished to come daily as does Bertha. She gave no reason only that she did not care to stay. Do not mention this to Amory, for it is too trivial to be brought to his attention, and indeed, I do not know why I permit it to trouble me."

"You've had a horrid day," said Elizabeth sym-

pathetically. "I wish we hadn't gone sailing and left you alone. What with Lydia's accident and all, I'm afraid you won't have a good night. Don't you want me to come and sleep on the couch in your room?"

"Thee is kind to think of it, Elizabeth, but I must not indulge my foolish weakness. And, indeed, I can have Amory at my side in one moment, for the dear boy has had a bell put into his room with the connecting wire to mine. I have but to touch a button which hangs beside my pillow and the bell rings at the head of his bed. I shall not hesitate to call him to me if I feel startled during the night. There, he is coming."

Both looked up expectantly as Dr. Russell entered. "I have been all over the house," he said cheerfully, "and I have talked with the police captain. It looks as though Friend Yin simply got cold feet over the idea of a call on strangers and took French leave. The police think he may yet be in Freeport, for they have ascertained that no person answering his description left by train. He may have gone by trolley or by motor-car but he is surely not in Journey's End. Thee may rest in peace, Aunt Eunice. And of his own accord the captain has ordered a man to patrol this street during the night."

"That is a comforting thought, Amory, but thy

presence is all I need for reassurance. Must thee go, Elizabeth? Then take her home, Amory."

"Let me go alone," said Elizabeth. "It is absurd to think I must have an escort just to next door. I'd rather he wouldn't leave you, Aunt Eunice."

"We will compromise," said Amory, smiling. "I will take you to the gate of Journey's End and watch you enter your own. Then I shall be within call of Aunt Eunice and yet keep you in sight."

"Good-night, dear Aunt Eunice," said Elizabeth, taking an affectionate leave. "Sleep well, and pleasant dreams."

The way to the front door lay past the east parlor and as they passed Elizabeth glanced in. "I still think that is a queer performance," she said.

"So do I," agreed Amory. "I have given orders for this Yin to be looked up and located, wherever he is. No doubt my sister sent him in all good faith and were it not for the things he left behind him I would believe myself what I told Aunt Eunice just now, that he merely changed his mind and went. But had he done that he would have taken his hat. That makes me think he left in very great haste and for some reason not at all apparent."

"Gracious!" said Elizabeth suddenly, "what *is* that?"

"Oh, just the eyes of the ivory dragon," said

Amory. He touched the switch inside the door and the stately room flashed into full vision. There on its green velvet mat stood the lordly dragon and upon a chair lay the hat, cane and gloves of the mysteriously vanished Yin.

"I see," said Elizabeth, relieved and ashamed of her sudden touch of nervousness. She glanced at Amory to see him staring at the dragon with a puzzled expression. "What is it?" she asked.

"Nothing," said Amory, putting out the light, but as they went down the hall he could have sworn that on the previous evening when he removed and broke the bell, the dragon stood with its head toward the garden and the sea. Now it was facing the street.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN WHICH ELIZABETH MAKES A CALL AND AMORY
ASKS A FAVOR

AMORY was too concerned about Mrs. Russell's agitation to leave her before he was certain she would have a quiet night. After she had gone to bed he read to her until she actually fell asleep. For a few moments he sat watching her quiet face and then, satisfied that the strange experience of the afternoon had done her no real harm, started for his own room.

A hanging light illuminated stairs and landing, and as Amory passed, his attention was attracted to the tall clock by the ship *Iris*.

“Stopped,” he thought, and was passing on when an idea occurred to him. It was unusual for that clock to stop; as a rule it was as steady as Time itself. He went down the few steps and opened the door.

“Of course that heathen Chinee isn’t here,” he reflected as he looked into the case, “only it is the one place I didn’t look, and I have hidden here myself when I was a kid. From Carol’s description

he could squeeze into a small hole. Empty, but the clock has stopped without running down."

The heavy weights on either cord hung but half-way from the floor of the clock-case. Amory glanced at its face. "Stopped at four-forty-seven," he commented. "Just about the time Friend Yin must have been here."

He started the pendulum and stood for a moment while it continued its rhythmic tick. Nothing appeared to be wrong, and, consulting his watch, he set the hands correctly. At that moment came a knock on the front door.

It was a soft knock as of one who merely wishes to attract attention rather than announce an arrival. Amory went down and opened the door the width of the chain. In the porch stood a patrolman.

"Is everything all right, Dr. Russell?" he asked.
"I saw a light."

"Right, thank you. I am just going to bed."

"Rum customer, that Chinee," observed the man.
"Nobody saw him come and nobody in town seems to have seen him leave."

"I know he isn't in the house. I have been all over it again since the first search."

"Beats me," said the officer. "I'm going to take a turn through your garden. I'll be in hearing, so just shout if you want help."

Amory thanked him and went up-stairs. He was tired and mentally disturbed and sleep was long in coming, though come it finally did. He woke early and immediately visited his aunt's bedside. She lay peacefully unconscious, her breath coming regularly, and Amory experienced a feeling of relief at her improved appearance.

"Lydia must come back," he thought. "I can't have Aunt Eunice left alone again. I'll get a trained nurse to wait on Lydia if she won't come under any other conditions."

While dressing he came across the letter received from Caroline on the previous morning and re-read it. "This is the twentieth century," he said to himself. "Amulets and evil spirits! What rot!"

Breakfast was late, and while they still lingered over the table on the terrace, Elizabeth came through the garden, looking, in her blue linen dress, quite in keeping with the larkspurs that bordered her path.

"How is Aunt Eunice?" she called. "And what is the matter with your telephone? Central said nobody would answer, and I thought I'd better come over at once."

"We didn't know anything was the matter," said Amory, rising to greet her. "Well! of course! That is my fault, and I beg your forgiveness. I forgot to throw on the down-stairs connection and the

bell has been ringing behind a closed door in my empty room."

"Oh, all right!" laughed Elizabeth. "But I was worried when I could not get one word."

"Come and kiss me, Elizabeth," said Mrs. Russell. "I am sorry thee worried. Here in the sunlight and the garden my fears of yestereve seem more foolish than I like to acknowledge. Dear, will thee have some coffee?"

"No, thank you. Dad made an early start for Boston and we breakfasted an hour ago. Very impolite of me to come and interrupt you. Please sit down and finish, Dr. Russell. If you don't I shall go straight home."

"It is odd to hear Amory addressed with such formality," said Mrs. Russell gently. "We Friends are accustomed to a plain name. You have seen considerable of each other now, can thee not be Amory and Elizabeth?"

Amory gave his aunt a quick glance. Had he been mistaken in thinking her a little unwilling that he should ask Elizabeth to go sailing? This certainly did not sound like it,—quite the contrary, in fact.

Elizabeth colored with embarrassment, but her composure was at once restored by the frank and pleasant smile with which Dr. Russell looked at her.

"Please, Elizabeth, have some grapes, if you refuse coffee," he said after the slightest pause, offering her a dainty fruit-plate. "And you ought not to scorn this coffee just because I made it."

"I didn't know you did," retorted Elizabeth. "Oh, Lydia isn't here?"

"And Bertha has not yet come," added Mrs. Russell. "She is due at any moment, but the breakfast is none of my getting. Amory did it all. I was permitted only to pick fresh flowers for the vase on the table."

"I shall persuade Lydia to come back to-day," said her nephew. "I think I can arrange things so she will. Are you going to the dance at the Yacht Club to-night, Elizabeth?"

"I think so," replied Elizabeth, her cheeks flushing slightly.

"If Lydia is here I believe I will attend. I haven't been there since I came home. Will you give me two dances?"

"Yes, but if you are late in coming I may not be able to keep them."

"Perhaps it might be safer to escort you then, if I may. Or has some one else that privilege?"

"No, I shall go with Dad. If you care to come with us, he will like to have you."

"Then I will see what I can do with Lydia and telephone you later in the morning. Thank you for letting me butt in."

"Can I do anything for you, Aunt Eunice?" asked Elizabeth. "I ought to go home and talk with the cook. I'm a wretched housekeeper, I fear. Margaret comes up and asks me what I want for dinner and if I suggest anything, she has some ponderous reason why it isn't practicable, and it always ends by her having exactly what she had decided to have when she came to me. Oh, Aunt Eunice, what a lovely little watch! I haven't seen it before."

"Amory brought it to me from Paris. I have worn it, but perhaps my sleeve has concealed it from thee. I never thought I should wear a wrist-watch, and indeed I never before saw one I cared to possess. But this is so very small and so entirely simple and plain that it does not seem showy and conspicuous like a gold one. They are pretty and suitable for young girls like thee, Elizabeth, but would be only a vanity for me. This, with its pale color, whiter even than silver, appeals to me. It is of a metal which I do not know, which Amory says is platinum. Somehow it seems suited to my simple dress."

Elizabeth looked at the young doctor, straight into eyes brimming with laughter. "She hasn't an

idea," thought Elizabeth, "that it cost three times as much as a gold one!"

"Don't tell her," said the laughing eyes, and Elizabeth smiled back. Their affectionate amusement over Mrs. Russell's unworldly enjoyment of that expensive little watch forged a bond of interest between them.

"It's a beauty, Aunt Eunice," said Elizabeth earnestly. "I've seen platinum watches before but they were very elaborately ornamented, not so pretty for you as this plain one."

"Amory said he could not find one that suited him, so had this made to order. I feel as though it was not inappropriate for my use. No, dear, I do not think of anything thee can do for me, but thy company is ever welcome. Ah, there is Lydia. Excuse me, children."

"Thanks for not giving me away," laughed Amory as his aunt went into the house. "If she had any idea of the real value of that timepiece, she would not wear it."

"It exactly suits her. I love platinum jewelry but I never expect to have any. I'm the third girl, you see, so there are two others besides Mother who come first, and Dad says he can't look like three million on thirty cents. It was clever of you to realize that perfectly plain platinum would look like Aunt Eunice."

"I didn't see anything in the Paris shops that she would wear, all I could find was some fine handkerchiefs, and I wanted something else. One day I saw a lot of wrist-watches and it came to me that the color of platinum was right for her if I could get one that wasn't elaborately carved and set with diamonds. So I had a heart-to-heart talk with the jeweler. He caught my idea exactly and took a lot of trouble over it. He assured me that *Madame, ma tante*, could not fail to approve, and she did. It amuses me unspeakably that she thinks a platinum watch less of a vanity than a gold one."

"I am afraid you like to tease," commented Elizabeth. "But was everything all right this morning?"

"Perfectly. And when I see you this evening I may have further news to report about Yin Luk. Sometime to-day I should hear from my request to the police."

Mrs. Russell came back and Elizabeth took leave. Amory went with her through the garden as far as the sea-wall. Their talk was trivial, about the larkspurs and the *Whitewing* and their picnic the previous evening and of a strange yacht anchored in the harbor, but as Elizabeth went up to her own home, she was conscious of an unusual feeling of happiness.

"It is too good to last," she said to herself. "It won't last, of course; it is just because Aunt Eunice likes me and he is nice for that reason, but I am going to enjoy it, and anyway, it will be a pleasant memory. And I shall not write one word of it to Maine."

All day Elizabeth went about with a happy face and when dinner was served, sat opposite her father with a sort of gentle radiance that attracted his attention, though she was less talkative than usual. When they were finishing the dessert, she proposed to have coffee brought to the veranda and led the way.

"What time do you want to start for that dance, Bess?" asked Mr. Emerson, as he settled himself in a luxurious chair.

"Half-past eight, nine—any time, Dad. Dr. Russell has asked if he may go with us."

Mr. Emerson glanced at her. She had spoken with studied indifference, but he was too sensitive to her moods not to note the undercurrent in her voice.

"Dr. Russell, eh? I thought he was considered unpardonably exclusive by all the old dowagers. So he is coming over? Doesn't that let me out of going?"

"It does not, Dad. I want you too. Dr. Russell is the third one in this party. And you mustn't

think he cares about going with me, either; it just happens."

"And it just happened that you went sailing yesterday? How about that, Bess?"

"Dad," said Elizabeth frankly, "I don't care a great deal about men, not the men who play around with Dot and Marion. Oh, I have played with them, too,—I admit it,—but down in the bottom of my heart I don't really like them. Dr. Russell is different. I had an awfully good time with him yesterday afternoon and it was because he didn't say or do one single thing I didn't like. And the nice part was that I knew in the beginning that he wouldn't, and so I didn't have to be on my guard lest he should. He was just nice,—oh, I don't suppose I can make you understand."

"I understand much more than you think, Bess," said Mr. Emerson reflectively.

"I hate a man who makes love the second time he meets you. I hate a man who wants to kiss every girl he meets and thinks he can do it. All girls aren't like that. I think Dr. Russell could be a real friend, one worth having. He was a fine comrade on that picnic. We liked the same sort of things, Dad, the sea and the dunes and all that. It was nothing much and never will be, but I want to enjoy it just while it lasts."

Elizabeth was sitting on the step near her

father's chair and when she stopped talking, he reached out and stroked her head.

"Russell seems a fine chap," he observed. "His father went the pace. I have been told that Charles Russell was a very brilliant fellow but utterly without any sense of responsibility. He was a man of such great personal charm that people loved him in spite of his faults. But I have never heard any serious criticism of young Amory; he seems to resemble his father only in good points. His Uncle Robert, who brought him up, was one of the finest men Freeport ever knew, and I can imagine Robert Russell took good care to guard against inherited tendencies in Amory. At any rate, he didn't break loose as his father did. The only thing I have heard against him is something I don't credit; that he is staying here in town and giving up opportunities which would be of great advantage to him professionally because of his aunt's money."

"I am sure that isn't true," said Elizabeth indignantly. "He as much as told me that he wanted to go elsewhere but stayed because he felt he ought not to leave her."

"I didn't believe it," said Mr. Emerson. "Amory inherited enough from his own father, so he ought not to worry. He does not strike me as that sort of fellow at all, and he certainly appears devoted to Mrs. Russell. Well, have a good time

with a pleasant playmate, Bess, only don't burn your fingers."

"I'm not likely to, Dad. And any moment I'm expecting him to act like other men, only I can't help hoping he won't. I'll go and dress. It's the Yacht Club, you know, so your flannels are all right."

CHAPTER XV

IN WHICH ELIZABETH AND AMORY GO TO A DANCE

WHILE preparing for the dance, Elizabeth smiled to herself, thinking of the comments which her appearance would have called forth from her sisters. For the first time in months she did not arrange her hair for the evening in an elaborate manner, but left it simply parted and waving back to a graceful knot in the neck. The style became her immensely, though she seldom chose to wear it thus. But since she had so shocked Aunt Eunice she had never visited Journey's End with other than a girlish coiffure. Tonight she felt instinctively that Amory would prefer it. Elizabeth would not have been human had she not taken especial pains with her dress, pains to make it charming, though avoiding anything extreme.

“Why, Bess,” said her father, meeting her in the lower hall, “how fine you look. Isn’t that a new frock?”

"Blind bat of a daddy! I've had this blue thing all winter, but I'm fond of it, so I thought I'd wear it once more."

"Somebody looks mighty sweet," went on her father teasingly. "I like you in blue, Bess, and that way you've done your hair is fetching. Dr. Russell is on the porch. I'll be ready in five minutes."

Elizabeth glanced through the big window to see Amory sitting sidewise on the railing and looking down to the sea, lighted now by the rising moon. He was in informal evening dress, as customary for a Yacht Club dance, and he sat very still, a characteristic she had already noticed. As she came from the house he rose to greet her.

"I meant to ask if I should bring my car and then I thought it was ridiculous since the club-house is only at the foot of the street."

"I'd much rather walk," said Elizabeth. "I never thought of driving."

She sat down in one of the wicker porch chairs, wondering if, in the glance he gave her, he appreciated that she was wearing the gown of their first encounter.

"Have any more visitors vanished into thin air?" she inquired.

"No," said Amory, smiling as he also took a chair, "but the mystery of Yin Luk is somewhat

deepened by the report made to me by the police. I telegraphed my sister and learned that Yin left Cornwall en route for Bar Harbor. Supposedly he was in Boston yesterday morning and came from there to Freeport. The police ascertained that he went to the Copley and that he claims not to have left it. He arrived there last evening about seven, wearing a hat, and his chauffeur, a Swede, declared that they had come directly from Cornwall and had not been near this section of the country. I asked for Yin by long distance telephone and he informed me most blandly that my charming sister, Mrs. Chittick, had indeed favored him with a letter of introduction. At this point he asked if I spoke French and then continued more fluently in that language.

“He told me that the letter was stolen from him in Hartford, by whom he has no idea, and that it is beyond his power to conjecture who took it to Journey’s End and there presented it. Nothing would give him greater pleasure than to inspect the oriental curiosities of which Mrs. Chittick had told him, but he was ‘desolated’ that this was impossible. His chief had recalled him to Washington and he was at that moment preparing to start.”

“Do you suppose that is true?” demanded Elizabeth.

“It was strictly true. The police verified the

telegram. He received it there at the Copley and did leave within an hour ostensibly for Washington. The clerk arranged for him on the Federal express and the chauffeur had orders to take the car as far as New York and await further instructions."

"Well, of all queer things!" said Elizabeth thoughtfully. "Then who left the hat and cane?"

"Who, indeed?" said Amory. "Nothing could have been more final than Yin's denial that he had ever been in Freeport, nothing more polite than his regrets over any inconvenience to us because of the letter presented by the person who stole it. I really don't know what to think. Even had I been able to interview him personally I doubt whether it would have been more satisfactory. An Oriental is an odd customer to deal with, though I must say I have usually found the Chinese easier to understand than the Japanese."

"Nothing explains why the person who brought the letter left so suddenly," observed Elizabeth.

"And that is the point which interests me most. Yin may, or may not, be lying about the letter being stolen, but in either case we are no nearer an explanation of why the man who did come, and who apparently presented the letter in all good faith, left before seeing any of the family. Bell says he was a foreigner, but very well-dressed. That, how-

ever, is true of any Chinese of the better class. I don't know whether we shall ever know any more about it."

"And did Lydia come back willingly?"

"Well, hardly that," said Amory with a laugh. "I laid down the law to her and threatened to engage a trained nurse to stay with Aunt Eunice unless she returned and unless she permitted Bell to give her what help she needed. The suggestion shocked her to the soul and she said she would return. Her hand was very much more comfortable this morning and that reconciled her to my insistence. I think Lydia didn't really believe I knew enough to set her finger, so she is feeling more confidence in my judgment. Also she was rather impressed because I got breakfast without devastating the entire kitchen.

"Lydia doesn't realize how much camping I have done," he went on. "Mrs. Avery taught both Putnam and me to cook. When we were about seventeen we went up to New Hampshire one winter vacation, to the Averys' camp on Big Squam. It was only a summer cottage, not plastered nor heated. We upset a pail of water on the kitchen floor and it froze and we never got it wiped up. All the time we were there that floor was glare ice and Putnam fell down and broke seven plates. There came a very cold snap, so we slept before the

big fireplace in the living-room and took turns to stay awake and keep the fire going."

"Were you snow-shoeing?"

"Yes, and skiing. We did some climbing but we had rather a tough experience with a sudden blizzard which came up. I broke a ski and we had a hard time getting back to civilization. Put wouldn't leave me and of course I was handicapped. We finally made a farmhouse some miles from our camp. They took us in and fed us and put us to bed exhausted, after telling us in plain language what fools they thought us. We agreed with them and we never told our respective families of that adventure. You have met the Averys, haven't you?"

"No," said Elizabeth. "Aunt Eunice sometimes speaks of them."

"They don't go out very much socially, especially since Put went away, but you would like them. Mrs. Avery—I always call her Aunt Ruth—is charming, the same type as Aunt Eunice, only younger. Here is your father."

"Hope I haven't kept you waiting," said Mr. Emerson. "Bess, why can't that idiot in the kitchen have hot water when I want it?"

"Did you ask her to light the heater, Dad dear?" inquired Elizabeth calmly.

"Yes, but asking didn't seem to produce any ef-

fect. No matter, I don't want it now. And, Bess, I met Proctor coming home from the station and said I'd take a hand at bridge, so if you feel the need of a chaperon you'll know where to find me."

"All right, Dad. Let's start, for this is a Saturday night dance and on the stroke of twelve you must be ready with the pumpkin coach and the white mice."

Elizabeth threw a filmy scarf about her bare throat and shoulders and took her father's arm. Amory fell into step on the other side and at once inquired for Billy and how he liked his camp. His one son was a subject of which Mr. Emerson never grew tired, and they were yet discussing Billy's sketchy and infrequent letters when they entered the big, somewhat bare rooms of the Yacht Club. Its walls were hung with banners and trophies and its excellent floor was already occupied by dancing couples.

With a word to his daughter, Mr. Emerson vanished in the direction of the card-room. Elizabeth chose to keep her thin scarf with her but went into the dressing-room to inspect her nose and hair. She took her turn at the glass amid a number of chattering girls.

"Gracious me!" exclaimed one with a sudden shriek after a peep into the assembly-room. "The

Grand Mogul has arrived! Jane Bradford, there's Amory Russell out there!"

"Who? Where?" came one exclamation after another. "Step out of the way, Sallie. Here, let me have a look. Who's the attraction? This is the first time he has condescended to attend a Saturday night. Did he come with anybody?"

Elizabeth, powdering her nose and then as carefully wiping it off, was discreetly silent, though conscious of a beating heart. She listened without a word to a number of frank comments on Dr. Russell's distinguished bearing and his infrequent appearances at social gatherings. Her own dress and the arrangement of her hair came in for remark.

"It's sweet, Bess, and I love it that way, but you look like a Quaker," said Jane, surveying with some satisfaction her own elaborate coiffure..

"You look about sixteen in that dress," added Lois Fletcher whose gown was quite as suitable for her mother as for herself. "You had it last winter, didn't you?"

"Yes," said Elizabeth sweetly. "It isn't new, but it has pleasant associations, so I wanted to wear it."

She was at the door as she spoke, and half hesitated. How the girls would talk and exclaim the moment her escort joined her! There was a crowd of young men waiting for the girls to come out, and

among them, Clive Templeton, generally considered Elizabeth's property.

There were moods when Elizabeth herself so considered him, the moods in which she wore garments of an extreme style and drove her car with an eye for a possible policeman. At such times, she did not mind Clive's proximity. As a rule he could be kept in check and his love-making tendencies nipped in the bud. Elizabeth had no real liking for him, in her better moments was unattracted by him, but he was the only son of wealthy parents and smiled upon by aspiring mothers, though the fact was well-known that four different colleges had found his pace too fast.

Clive was near the door, the last person whom Elizabeth wished to meet this evening. But as she hesitated, Amory detached himself from a group and came toward her with a smile. The next moment they were circling the room.

Elizabeth was conscious of surprised faces among the young people of both sexes, but she was also conscious of feeling pleased. Amory danced as only those can who have perfect control over every muscle and nerve. He held her exactly right, as well, with firm hand offering sufficient support, and yet with no touch of familiarity.

Elizabeth found herself taking mental notes of these and of other things, of the expression on Mrs.

Jardine's face as she recognized them, of the fact that though the night was warm Amory's linen was absolutely immaculate and his ungloved fingers not unpleasantly moist. She talked easily and unconcernedly, hoping all the time that none of the other men would cut in.

Nobody did, though Elizabeth caught one glance of Clive with his lower jaw absolutely dropped and at the sight had a sudden impulse to giggle.

"Joke?" asked Amory smiling. "Who is the young chap glowering at us?"

Elizabeth told him quite frankly.

"Oh, yes, I know. He was just a boy when I went away but I remember some of his escapades. We used to call him the Million Dollar Kid. Is he a special friend of yours?"

"I know him quite well," said Elizabeth rather unwillingly and then went on honestly. "He's horribly fresh but sometimes he's rather fun to play with when there isn't anybody else."

"I never thought there was any real harm in him. It was a case of a badly spoiled child and too much money. He'll be all right when he settles down. You'll have to give him a dance or from his expression there will be murder done."

Elizabeth laughed and to her relief found that the pleasant comment removed all uneasiness from her feeling about Clive. When the music stopped

they found themselves near him. He promptly came up looking rather belligerent, but Amory greeted him so cordially that to his own surprise, Clive found himself taking the outstretched hand.

"Oh, yes, I remember you," he said gruffly. "You're just back from France. No, I didn't get over. I went in for aviation and got side-tracked in Texas. Had the measles. Then they sent me to Oklahoma and I no sooner struck that place than I was stuck in the hospital with scarlet fever. Got over that and fell off a motor-cycle and broke my ankle. All I ever saw of the war was three different hospitals."

"Hard luck," Amory agreed. "Was that all that happened to you? Haven't you forgotten something?"

"Sprained a shoulder playing football, but that was in the day's work," said Clive, smiling involuntarily and thereby transforming his rather sullen face in a pleasant manner. "Eve," he added, turning to Elizabeth, "I claim this dance."

Elizabeth assented, no longer afraid that Amory would misjudge her for dancing with Clive Templeton. Amory left her with a smile and a slight bow.

"I haven't seen Russell for years," said Clive as he swung Elizabeth into the dance. "Did he come with you, Eve?"

"Journey's End is next door. He walked down with Dad and me."

"They said he did corking fine work in France," Clive went on. "After the armistice he was in some town when the British prisoners began to come through from Germany. They were in awful shape. Russell was the only doctor there and he really hadn't any business to work except under American direction and in an American hospital, but they say he just knocked all rules and regulations galley west and dug in his toes and took care of those released prisoners and saved the situation,—he and some American Y workers. It was forty-eight hours before the British Red Cross arrived. He might have been court-martialed for breaking all red tape, but he wasn't. I guess they were glad he tackled the job. That was something worth doing. I never knew him much because he was older. He and Tom Howland and Put Avery were always together. Must be sort of hard for Russell to come back to Freeport when they were killed in France. Ever see that old aunt of his? Oh, I forget, she's a chum of yours. Some old girl, too. How about the Country Club to-morrow afternoon?"

"I can't promise anything," said Elizabeth cautiously. "No, Clive, let's keep this step. I don't feel like racketing to-night. Besides, the Yacht Club bars it."

"I've looked all over the floor and there's nobody to stop us. Let's put some pep into the place."

"No, I won't. Put your hand back where it belongs and hold your head up."

"Gee, but you're cross to-night, Eve. What do you care what they think? Two weeks ago you were ready to go the limit."

"That Saturday isn't this," replied Elizabeth curtly. "Either dance as I want you to or take me over to Mrs. Thompson."

Clive looked sulky but mended his manners and Elizabeth had no further reason for complaint. Through the rest of the dance and others that succeeded she kept one eye alert for Amory's movements. For some time he did not appear on the floor but after a while she saw him dancing with Phebe Ames and then with Helen Sturgis. Helen was a quiet girl whose family had always lived in Freeport, a girl never specially popular, but one who invariably had a pleasant word for every one. After that, Elizabeth saw Amory in deep conversation for a long time with an elderly gentleman whom she knew to be one of the directors of the Yacht Club. The evening was wearing on before he came to claim his second dance.

"I'm afraid you are finding us very frivolous," she said as they started. "Here I have been dancing every single dance, not to count the cut-ins, and

I have seen you on the floor only twice. Are you being exclusive or don't you know the girls? I'll introduce you. They're all crazy to meet you. Haven't you seen the chaperones craning their necks?"

"Which question shall I answer first? As for being exclusive, I hope I am not snobbish, but frankly, there are only a few girls here with whom I care to dance. Shall I shock you if I say I don't mind any amount of necessary undress in a sick-room, but at a dance I prefer my partner to wear a reasonable amount of clothes."

"Some of the costumes are pretty extreme," assented Elizabeth, repressing a desire to laugh.

"And I have been out of this sort of thing so long that I have rather lost interest. Some of these modern dances, too, seem barbaric. But I suspect I am prejudiced. Remember that I was brought up by a little Quaker saint."

"And you would not exchange it for anything else," said Elizabeth quickly.

"Indeed I would not. There have been times in my life when the memory of Journey's End and my Uncle Robert and the little Quaker lady have kept me from messing things. But I think Freeport is changing. I belonged to the Yacht Club and danced here when I was growing up, but somehow as I remember, we used to have just as much

fun in a simpler way. Or perhaps it is because I am older that I like better the *Whitewing* and the open sea. There is an interesting island, scarcely more than a sand-bar, not far away where the terns breed. Would you like to sail out some afternoon and see their nests and their funny fuzzy chickens?"

"I'd love it," said Elizabeth. "I'd enjoy nothing better. I like to dance, but I love that sort of thing, too."

"And I like dancing when it is with my present partner," said Amory with his pleasant smile. "Shall you think me impertinent if I ask whether this is not the blue frock of our first meeting when we didn't know each other?"

"You are very observant," Elizabeth evaded, though she had hoped he would notice it. "Do you always inspect every stranger so closely?"

"It is a doctor's business to be observant. No detail is too small to have a bearing on a case, but I don't always take notes of people's dress. In this case I had reason to do so. Some time when I know you very well I will tell you why I remembered the blue frock. Haven't they cut the music short?"

"It does seem so," sighed Elizabeth. The end of the dance had left them near one of the doors to the wide piazza.

"Let's come outside," suggested Amory. "The sea is wonderful."

Elizabeth willingly agreed. She was tired and hot from dancing and the veranda overhanging the water, with its many chairs and broad railing, looked inviting.

"Have you no wrap but that thin scarf? Then we must get out of the wind. I know where there is a sheltered place if somebody else hasn't taken it."

Amory led the way to a little detached summer-house at one corner, closed on three sides but with the fourth open to the ocean and the moon. Just as they reached it there was a disturbance on the piazza and a voice called Amory's name.

"Is that you, Dr. Russell? Come quickly, will you? Somebody in a faint here."

With a word of apology, Amory turned back. Elizabeth, following, saw him enter the ball-room where a crowd was gathered in one corner.

"Everybody stand aside, please," he said. "The first thing is air—please, everybody leave this part of the room."

There was a general movement in response. The next moment Elizabeth caught a glimpse of Amory on one knee beside a slight figure in pink chiffon, whom she recognized as Doris Jardine. Her mother had just grasped the identity of the sufferer and was approaching majestically from afar.

Amory and Peter Larrabee, her partner, picked

Doris up bodily and carried her out on the piazza. "Stay behind," Peter called over his shoulder. "Doctor's orders. Clear the decks and go on dancing. This way, Mrs. Jardine."

Amory was dashing water in Doris's face when Mrs. Jardine, portentous and anxious, arrived.

"Doris, what happened? Oh, my dear child! How very fortunate you were here, Dr. Russell. What should we have done without you? Doris, look at me. Speak, dearest."

"She will be all right in a minute, Mrs. Jardine," said Amory, still dabbling water. "I wonder if there aren't some salts in the ladies' room. Will you go and see, Miss Emerson?"

Elizabeth fled hastily on her errand, convulsed by Mrs. Jardine's tone and by the expression on Amory's face as she saw it in the light from the open door. As a matter of fact, Doris was already herself and Amory knew it. He was at a loss to understand why she feigned unconsciousness, and when Elizabeth arrived with the salts, applied them to Doris's daintily powdered nose in unnecessary strength. Doris could no longer pretend and sat up with a gasp, only to fall back against Amory's shoulder. Elizabeth, standing in the shadow, found herself heartily amused by the situation.

"Don't move, Doris darling," implored her mother. "Wait till you are quite yourself. Tell

her to keep still, Dr. Russell. What was the matter?"

"I was too hot," said Doris sulkily. "I didn't feel very well, anyway. I want to go home."

"Dearest, you shall. Mr. Larrabee, won't you telephone for our car?"

The willing Peter departed and Doris continued to prop herself against Amory. He gave her adequate support, but his face wore a positively inscrutable expression. To Elizabeth, who had learned to know it as remarkably indicative of any passing mood, its absolute woodenness was extremely comical. She had a feeling that if Amory should glance at her it would be with laughter in his eyes. His voice, however, was expressive only of concern for Doris's comfort, and he held the smelling salts in a truly sympathetic manner during the few moments before the motor arrived. Elizabeth offered to obtain Doris's wrap from the maid, an offer which Mrs. Jardine accepted, though with a sharp glance seeming to indicate distrust as to why she should suddenly concern herself to be helpful.

"How sweet Bess Emerson looks to-night," she observed blandly as Elizabeth departed on her errand. "And she and young Templeton have not made themselves conspicuous as is usually the case. At a recent dance their behavior was such that one

of the club directors had to take Clive aside and tell him it must be stopped. But Bess has really conducted herself like a lady to-night. It is such a pity she has that inclination to be fast. One regrets it in so young a girl."

"I like Bess," said Doris bluntly. "She is no worse than lots of the girls, Mother."

Amory paid no apparent attention to either remark and Mrs. Jardine changed the subject. When Elizabeth arrived with the rose-colored evening cape, she had evidently been trying to pin Amory down to a dinner date.

"I am really unable to say from day to day what I can do, Mrs. Jardine," he was explaining. "Even to-night I was uncertain whether it would be possible for me to leave. I can make positively no engagements in advance. Now, Miss Jardine, if you will let me put this cape around you. Take my arm to the car."

"It would relieve me so much to have you go home with us, Dr. Russell," persisted Mrs. Jardine. "I will put Doris to bed immediately and then if you would just take a look at her, perhaps give her something to make her sleep."

Elizabeth was trying not to laugh and Doris saw. "Mother, *don't*," she said pettishly. "To faint in a hot room isn't necessarily fatal. It's ridiculous to drag Dr. Russell away from the dance. He needn't

even take me to the car ; Peter will do that. If you find when I get home that I'm dying or coming to pieces somehow, that will be time enough to send for a doctor. Thank you, and good-night."

"But Peter isn't a doctor —" began Mrs. Jardine.

"Come on, Mother!" commanded Doris crossly, snatching Peter's arm.

"Well —" said Mrs. Jardine helplessly, and then she followed, after effusive thanks to Amory and a very stiff bow in Elizabeth's direction. Amory opened the door for her courteously and stood for a second looking after the party. Then he turned to Elizabeth and the face recently so impassive was now that of a mischievous boy.

"I didn't dare look at you," he said merrily. "*Madame, la mère*, who is she, anyway? I only know they are newcomers to Freeport."

"Mr. Jardine is in oil, not broking, but something to do with the Standard Oil Company. Doris really is a nice child, but Mrs. Jardine,—well—she isn't like Aunt Eunice."

"I should say not!" Amory shook his head gravely and then looked at his watch. "Is it at midnight that the pumpkin coach is due?"

Elizabeth leaned over to look at the dial. "Ten minutes after eleven. Personally I don't care to stay any longer. I think I'll rout Dad out. Prob-

ably he's losing money and he can't afford it."

"I have a better plan. Let's have this dance just beginning and then tell Mr. Emerson that we are going to walk on the beach for fifteen or twenty minutes and that I will take you home."

"Great idea," assented Elizabeth. It was with a happy face she leaned over her father's shoulder in the card-room.

"What's that, Bess? Oh, all right, go ahead. I'm having too good luck to leave. Have you had a pleasant evening?"

"The best ever," said Elizabeth softly, and then she left him, rejoicing inwardly that there were no patronesses to take leave of. All she and Amory had to do was to depart by one of the doors opening on the porch and from there follow the steps to the beach.

The moon was almost full and the sea lay as though calmed by its radiance. An unusually low tide left bare a wide strip of sand, twice as broad as was ordinarily the case.

"Your dancing slippers!" said Amory suddenly. "I had forgotten that it might be difficult to walk in them. I have seen you wear only nice, sensible sport shoes."

"I wouldn't want to walk far in these," said Elizabeth quietly, "but we must stay out only

a few moments. "When," she added, "will you know me well enough to tell me why you remembered my blue dress, though at the time I was a stranger?"

"I remembered it because I had reason to think we might not remain strangers," he said teasingly. "That is mean of me,—isn't it,—just to make you wonder more? For I don't intend to tell you just yet. First we must visit the terns and have our picnic on the dunes. And then I will see about telling you."

"Does Aunt Eunice know?"

"She does not," replied Amory, laughing outright. "You will learn nothing by questioning her. My conscience condemns me whenever I try to tease Aunt Eunice, so you mustn't mind my experimenting on you. By the way, Aunt Eunice told me to ask if you would not like to come to First Day meeting to-morrow."

"I'd like to, but I'm afraid I shouldn't fit in."

"You will. And I think you will find it a peaceful experience. Come up through the garden about ten and I'll let you in by one of the west windows in the sitting-room. You can sit there in the alcove and see hardly any one unless you choose."

"Well—perhaps," said Elizabeth. "Here we are at my wall. I ought to go in now."

"Thank you for letting me go with you," said

Amory, as they reached the house. "May I go again?"

"That depends on how much you tease," said Elizabeth saucily from the piazza. "Good-night."

"Oh, but there should be another word after that. My name begins with A."

Elizabeth laughed. The moonlight did not betray her pretty blush, only the graceful gesture with which she turned away. "Amory, then," she added.

"Good-night, Elizabeth," he responded. "Aunt Eunice and I will look for you in the morning."

CHAPTER XVI

IN WHICH MR. EMERSON SLEEPS LATE AND HIS DAUGHTER RECEIVES A MESSAGE

ELIZABETH was long in sleeping that night, for her mind was too full of happy thoughts to permit oblivion. It was becoming plain that Amory really liked her company, was seeking it for his own satisfaction, not merely out of courtesy for his aunt's young friend. Certainly, in a very nice manner, he had given her to understand that he wanted to see more of her and know her better.

The side of her nature which responded to Mrs. Russell and shrank from Clive's influence recognized this fact, and all that was sweet and womanly in her character rose in answer to it. She was unspeakably thankful she could have this little time alone at home, could enjoy the lovely thing which seemed coming into her life, unspoiled by comments from mother and sisters. It might never be anything more than a pleasant comradeship for a summer, but she wanted to keep even that for herself alone.

She heard her father come in long after midnight

while she yet lay watching the moonlight on the floor. Later she fell into a light doze, from which she awoke with the impression that there were steps in the hall and a voice at the telephone. The impression was not strong enough to induce her to investigate and she presently concluded she had been dreaming. The next she knew it was broad daylight and but for a sea breeze would have been hot.

Mr. Emerson usually slept late on Sunday and Elizabeth did not intend to disturb him. They were not a church-going family, unless for some especial reason. Mr. Emerson never went, though he contributed generously to All Saints, the Freeport church to which the Emersons nominally belonged. The three girls had been confirmed at boarding-school as being the proper thing for well-brought-up young ladies, but to none of them had it meant anything in particular. Elizabeth, indeed, frankly refused to join the class until overcome by the combined influence of her mother and the school principal, both of whom were openly horrified. Elizabeth gave in, though she sulked over the necessity and always balked when Mrs. Emerson desired her to do any church work. Yet there were times when, having ascertained that none of the others were going to attend service, Elizabeth would arrive a little late and steal

quietly into a pew at the rear of the church, ignoring the conspicuous one in the centre aisle which her family rented. Sometimes she found what she went for; oftener, she did not.

To-day she asked the cook to give her breakfast on the porch and ate with a book propped against the cream pitcher. Her mind was not on its pages, for she was trying to decide whether to accept Mrs. Russell's invitation. Had the others been at home nothing could have induced her to do so, but it was not probable that her father would even get up before noon.

She felt decided curiosity as to the nature of this First Day meeting. Judging from the Friends she had met, they had something in their lives which added poise and calm, and a great inward peace, to which she was a stranger. And if she went she would see Amory again; perhaps he might sit near her.

The scale finally dipped in favor of going. Elizabeth surveyed her white dress, concluded that it was perfectly suitable and appropriate and then deliberated whether or not to wear a hat. She decided to do so, but chose the simplest one she possessed, a broad-brimmed panama. She was leaving her room ready to go over to Journey's End when her father called her as she passed his open door.

"Come in for a moment, Bess. What, going to church, dear?"

"A sort of church," admitted Elizabeth. "Mrs. Russell has asked me several times to come to their Sunday morning meeting, and she sent a special invitation for to-day, so I thought I would go. It's all right, isn't it, Daddy?"

Mr. Emerson, lying against his pillows, surveyed his daughter quizzically. Elizabeth was not considered so pretty as either Dorothy or Marion, but even to others beside a partial father, her vivid expressive face and eyes of changing color were attractive. Bess had "style," as even critical elder sisters admitted, and the possessor of that indefinable quality can dispense with more conventional charms. This morning Mr. Emerson noticed about her the same illusive radiance of the previous evening.

"Of course it is all right, Bess. You couldn't get into bad company in Journey's End. I wondered whether you woke when I telephoned there last night."

"Why, no, Dad," said his daughter wonderingly. "And yet I had an impression that I heard something. What happened?"

"We played till they shut the club. It must have been after midnight when I came home and I didn't go directly to bed. Proctor stopped and we

smoked on the porch, so it was about half-past one when I came up to my room. I didn't put on a light, for the moon was so bright and it was too hot to draw the shades. As I was undressing I stood near the window there. I don't know whether you have noticed, but it looks into the garden of Journey's End."

"I know," said Elizabeth.

"I distinctly saw a man come up from the seawall through the garden, taking side paths as though he wanted to keep out of sight. At first I thought it might be young Russell, but he wore flannels last night and it wasn't probable he would bother to change after coming from the dance. Then I saw that the man was a short chap, not nearly so tall as the doctor. It was stupid of me not to realize at once that he had no business there, but I didn't know how late it really was. I went on undressing, though I did watch to see the man come out from the shrubbery. He went up beyond the brick terrace and then came a glimmer of bright light as though he had turned on a flash. I came to my senses and made for the telephone. Central was asleep and it seemed ages before I got the connection. Dr. Russell answered at once and I told him what I had seen. He thanked me and dropped the receiver. Half an hour later he called me to say that I had probably frustrated some sort

of burglary, for the man had been trying to jimmy the window of a room he called the east parlor."

"Goodness!" said Elizabeth. "How lucky you saw him."

"Sheer chance. Dr. Russell wondered whether it had any connection with an odd visitor they had a day or so ago. He told me about that. Looks as though something was going on."

"But what can they be after?" asked Elizabeth meditatively.

Mr. Emerson smiled. "Plenty in Journey's End to attract a thief. Since I handle their insurance, I happen to know that they carry fifty thousand on the furniture alone, exclusive of the house itself. I have wondered that Mrs. Russell never felt uneasy about living alone in that big place."

"Until Dr. Russell came home the man who cares for the furnace and the garden slept in the house. Daddy, did you ever go to a Friends' meeting?"

"Once. It was impressive. They are usually fine people, little girl, men and women of sterling character."

"Until I knew Mrs. Russell so well, I had always supposed they were rather narrow," said Elizabeth, looking thoughtfully at her father's watch lying on a stand by his bed. "She has such high ideals and

she lives up to them, but she is always charitable toward other people."

"She is a wonderful woman. If I believed in theosophy and the transmigration of souls,—which I don't,—I should say hers was a soul that had so grown in love and beauty that it had very nearly achieved perfection in this life."

"Dad," said Elizabeth abruptly, "what *do* you believe anyhow?"

"That's too big a question to answer on a Sunday morning before a man is even out of bed. I believe that it pays to be honest and to be kind, and to leave the world a little better than we find it—if we can. I think that the great first principle, call it God or whatever you will, has a plan for this creation and that it is up to us to further His purposes so far as in us lies. That won't hold water in any church I ever heard of, Bess, but I am trying to live up to it."

"You are the best ever," said Elizabeth, kissing him.

"Religion never seems to me a matter of a formal creed but rather an attitude of mind and spirit. In some ways, I believe the Friends come pretty near the truth as I see it. Anything special to tell your old daddy, dear?"

"Only a favor to ask, as usual. Please, when you write to Bar Harbor, don't say anything about

my sailing with Dr. Russell, or about the dance, or to-day either. I'd like just you to know for the present."

"Never one word will I say," replied her father affectionately. "Just close that blind, Bess. I think I'll turn over and take another nap."

Elizabeth adjusted the blinds, with a glance into the garden next door, where she saw Amory strolling hatless among the larkspurs. "I wonder whether he has come to meet me," she thought, an inference justified by his glance at his watch.

Elizabeth went at once though she was not late. As she entered by the sea-wall gate Amory came toward her.

"Good-morning," he said. "I hoped you would come."

Elizabeth smiled back as she returned the greeting. "And how is Aunt Eunice?" she asked. "Dad has just been telling me about the excitement last night."

"Aunt Eunice knew nothing about it and I do not intend to tell her just yet. Lydia was awakened, too, and came to my room just as I answered your father's ring. There's no doubt that somebody tried to force a window in the east parlor and was frightened away. Lydia, as she came from her room to mine, put on lights which showed on that side of the house and gave the man warning. I

went down instantly, but he was gone, leaving the marks of his jimmy plainly on the window."

"What do you think he was after?" inquired Elizabeth.

"I don't know. Robbery of some kind, but coming so soon after Yin's mysterious performance, I begin to wonder what is in the air. Your father said the man was short and small. So far the description tallies with what we know of Yin, but he is undoubtedly in Washington, and one could hardly suppose a member of the Chinese Legation to stoop to anything like this. We have never feared burglars at Journey's End, but if this is to go on, we may have to put in an alarm. If I knew what was the attraction, that might help me to form an opinion, but there is never a large amount of money in the house and the silver is kept in a rather formidable safe. What do you think will happen next?"

Amory spoke as though interested in the coming development rather than alarmed by its possible nature. "There is Aunt Eunice," he added. "She never comes down on First Day until time for meeting, so I have not seen her yet. We ought to go in."

Mrs. Russell stood on the terrace as they came toward her, welcoming them with a smile.

"Thee has a morning face, Elizabeth," she said as the girl kissed her. "I trust it is morning in

thy heart as well and that thee may receive a message during our worship."

A very sweet expression crossed Elizabeth's countenance but she made no audible answer. Mrs. Russell kissed Amory.

"Thee, too, dear boy. Elizabeth, do not feel thyself a stranger. Thee is most welcome. All thee has to do is to sit in silence and await the coming of the Spirit. One brings to the silent hour the best one has to give, and brings it in the quest of the highest. Take her into the west room, Amory, and let her choose her seat before the others arrive. And then, dear, will thee go to Lydia a moment? Her bandage has slipped and she would like it adjusted."

Amory took Elizabeth into the west sitting-room. "Would you like to sit here?" he asked, indicating a chair in the bay by the chimney. "You can see without being seen."

"Thank you," said Elizabeth, seating herself.

"I will go to Lydia now," said Amory, dropping into her lap a single pansy from the bunch he held. "When I picked that one it reminded me of you."

He left her at once and Elizabeth studied the pansy, one of odd coloring, for its centre was a greenish brown and its edges pale blue, a beautiful flower though most unusual. She looked at it, wondering why he thought she resembled it.

The next moment two Friends entered the room, seated themselves and at once became wrapped in meditation. Elizabeth, at one side of the company and slightly behind it, could, as Amory told her, see without being in view herself. Directly opposite, on the other side of the bay, stood a comfortable low sofa, but this did not appear to be a favorite seat with the regular habitués, for no one took it. Elizabeth recognized some of the men as they came, figures prominent in Freeport. She saw Phebe Ames with an elderly lady in full Quaker garb, evidently her grandmother.

Presently two people came to the sofa in the bay, both strangers to Elizabeth, but as they seated themselves, she thought them the most distinguished-looking couple she had ever seen. The man, tall, finely built, with iron-gray hair, had clear-cut aristocratic features and a commanding presence. Neither he nor his wife was dressed in the orthodox manner of the older Friends, indeed, the lady's soft silk gown was well within the scope of fashion and her hat met with Elizabeth's instant approval. Yet her attire was subdued and her face one that had known suffering. It was a beautiful face, lovely both in expression and in feature, and Elizabeth found herself thinking that she must have been a rarely charming young girl.

Lydia entered, her hand in a sling, followed

shortly by Mrs. Russell, who seated herself near the door. Amory had not appeared and Elizabeth found herself wondering about him and a little disappointed that he would not now be near her when he did come, since he would scarcely cross the big room to her corner. Complete silence fell.

Elizabeth had forgotten the French window opening upon the garden, and presently Amory came from that direction. Opening the screen-door, he stepped into the bay by the fireplace. The lady on the sofa looked toward him with a smile.

Amory shut the door, sat down beside her, put his left arm around her shoulders and kissed her most affectionately. Then he reached a hand toward her husband, who smiled and pressed it heartily.

“They must be somebody he knows very well,” thought Elizabeth. The lady was saying a few soft words now, her lips almost against Amory’s cheek. He shook his head as he straightened up, gave her another look, and then, to Elizabeth’s secret delight and the evident indulgent amusement of the lady herself, proceeded to unbutton and pull off the glove on her right hand. Having done this, he settled back in the corner of the sofa with the hand clasped between both his own. Her husband watched the operation thoughtfully and then gazed

into the garden. Evidently he was entirely willing that Amory should hold his wife's hand and, except for that youthful performance, Amory's conduct was irreproachable. He did not even look at Elizabeth, sitting directly opposite, but kept his gaze on the floor.

A long time passed. At first Elizabeth felt nervous and excited, but gradually a pronounced calm stole upon her, a feeling of reverence and a sense of being near something holy. There were moments in the past when she had experienced fleeting glimpses of the eternal mountains, known the sense of a great Presence, but those moments had rarely been in an orthodox place of worship. They had come to her in the sound of organ music, in the thunder of breaking surf, in the deep woods when a thrush sang, sometimes when one of her wild moods had been followed by one of repentance. For almost the first time, she experienced it in the company of others, and recognized it for what it was.

And if Elizabeth were conscious of the hovering Spirit, she humbly felt that every one in the room must be far more so. She tried to concentrate her mind, to keep it on the aspirations toward good that she so fitfully followed, and in her own way, prayed that she might further God's work on earth, prove an instrument ready for His use. It was an ear-

nest wish and Elizabeth was unused to genuine prayer.

Presently she heard a voice, that of a man, asking that in the troublous times of the country special gifts of wisdom and understanding might be given those upon whom was laid great responsibility and the problems of leadership. It was an earnest plea for the nation, that she might be kept true to high ideals and so work out her destiny that those who had given their lives for those ideals might not have died in vain.

Elizabeth chanced to be looking at the hands Amory held clasped upon his knee, and at the words saw a sudden convulsive movement of the one enclosed in his, saw the strong pressure that instantly answered. Light flashed upon her immediately. That lady was Putnam Avery's mother; the fine-looking man his father.

The prayer concluded, silence again fell, broken presently by another voice, reciting a poem Elizabeth had recently read in a book picked up at Journey's End. She recognized it at once as Whittier's *Eternal Goodness*. As it neared the close the words fell like a benediction.

“I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air.
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.”

No one said anything more. The healing silence fell again, unbroken till the clock struck the hour. Then after a fitting interval the older Friends began to clasp hands and exchange greetings.

Amory picked up the glove he had spread on the end of the sofa and said something in a low tone to his neighbor, looking across at Elizabeth as he spoke. Then he rose.

"Aunt Ruth, I want you to meet Elizabeth Emerson. This is Mrs. Avery, Elizabeth."

Mrs. Avery turned with the same lovely smile that greeted Amory's coming. "I am so glad to meet you, Elizabeth. Amory has told me of your picnic on Clam Island and I wondered when I saw you if you were not his companion. Henry, this is Elizabeth Emerson."

Mr. Avery greeted her cordially but favored her with a keen inspection from under heavy gray eyebrows. Elizabeth found herself feeling like a schoolgirl.

"Once or twice when I have come to see Eunice I have just missed seeing you, Elizabeth," Mrs. Avery went on in her charming manner. "I hope Amory has not shocked you this past hour. It was but a reminiscence of a time when two small boys could not be trusted to sit together and I sat between to keep the peace and each would claim a hand."

"You know I always hold your hand when I can do so, Aunt Ruth. I thought you came purposely to this corner."

Elizabeth laughed at his mischievous tone and Mrs. Avery smiled at them both. "You probably know how Amory loves to tease," she said affectionately. "He was ever trying some new trick when he visited us."

"Aunt Ruth always did know how to deal with naughty boys," said Amory in the same tone. "We had to get up early if we wanted to get ahead of her."

"Will you come to see me, Elizabeth?" asked Mrs. Avery. "I make no social calls now, but you will overlook that and come informally, as you come to Journey's End. Amory, will you not bring her to Hillcrest?"

"I should be very glad to, Aunt Ruth," Amory assented instantly.

"I would like very much to come," said Elizabeth, blushing.

"Amory comes and goes as he likes and any day that you arrange with each other will suit me."

"Well?" asked Amory of Elizabeth as they found themselves alone in the general conversation. "Was there anything very appalling in First Day meeting?"

"I thought it was sweet," said Elizabeth soberly.

"I know now what Aunt Eunice means by the 'Spirit.' Something *does* come. I have read, you know, about two or three being gathered together, but I never truly *felt* it before. I did for a little while."

She stopped, feeling suddenly shy and uncomfortable, but there was only friendliness in Amory's steady glance.

"I thought you would feel it," he said as gravely. "I was sure I couldn't be mistaken. When such a set of people as these here get together, men like Uncle Henry and Mr. Swain and Mr. Gifford, and women like Aunt Eunice and Aunt Ruth,—it gets passed on, so to speak. Oh, I knew you would belong!"

He stopped short, leaving Elizabeth to wonder what he meant, but she had no further opportunity to find out, even had she wished to ask.

When she again found herself in her own room, her father being yet invisible, she sat down to think. Mrs. Russell had hoped that she would receive a special message. There had been one and Elizabeth could read it plainly now, read it in a number of little things; in the invitation to the meeting; in the pansy, which was a combination of a thunder-cloud and a sky of blue; in Mrs. Avery's cordiality; in the sudden glance of her husband; in the mere fact that Amory had told them about the

sail and the picnic supper. These people loved Amory, loved him very dearly and they wanted to know *her*, to see—Elizabeth told herself fiercely—if she was good enough for him.

“I’m not,” she admitted with more of sorrow than of anger. “I’m not and I never can be like those women he has loved all his life.”

For a time Elizabeth was silent and then she read the message a line farther. They would not be interested to know more of her unless Amory had shown them that he was beginning to care. And at the very last he had said that he knew she would “belong.”

Elizabeth’s head went down on her window-sill. Beyond doubt she had received her message.

CHAPTER XVII

IN WHICH AMORY SAILS A RACE AND TELLS A GIRL
THAT HE LOVES HER

“**L**YDIA, is thee not doing too much for the good of thy hand?” Mrs. Russell inquired a fortnight later, as she encountered the old servant coming from the office, a dry mop under one arm. “It is Bell’s duty to keep Amory’s rooms tidy. If she is negligent, see that she does her work again but do not do it thyself.”

“The floor of the waiting-room did not suit me, but now that I have been over it, I am not so sure that Bell was negligent. I must order a new mop. Working with this one is like trying to mop a floor with a bald-headed man.”

“Order another by all means,” said Mrs. Russell smiling.

“Bell dusted thoroughly,” Lydia went on, “so the streaky floor may be laid to the mop. Amory did not notice; men never see dirt, and then he is preoccupied. He told me that in Dr. Utter’s absence he is taking his patients.”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Russell, “that is why he has

been so busy these two weeks past. It was a compliment that Dr. Utter should ask him."

"I notice that on several afternoons he has found time to go sailing with Elizabeth Emerson," said Lydia, looking with a certain anxiety at Mrs. Russell.

"And is that not natural, Lydia? Both are young and youth calls to youth."

"It is very natural," Lydia assented with a sigh. "And thee is fond of Elizabeth and she of thee."

Lydia went into the kitchen, and Mrs. Russell stood thoughtfully by the garden door. She knew perfectly well what was in Lydia's mind, knew, too, the deep and abiding affection that prompted her interest.

It was true that Amory found time for the *White-wing* even when his own patients had increased to such an extent that his office hour was sometimes doubled, and when occupied with Dr. Utter's practice as well. It was also true that Elizabeth came to Journey's End as she had always done, but invariably at an hour when she knew Amory would be away. She read with Mrs. Russell and worked in the garden, always leaving before Amory was due. When Mrs. Russell detained her, as she often did, Elizabeth was brightly friendly, but nothing more. Where was it to end?

For the hundredth time, Mrs. Russell asked her-

self this question and found no answer. "Time alone can show whether Amory really cares," she thought as she turned away. "For some reasons I wish it were Phebe, but I will give him every opportunity to be with Elizabeth and to learn to know her. After doing that, I can only wait."

That very evening, Mr. Emerson came with Elizabeth to call and talked with Mrs. Russell while the others discussed the boat races just beginning. In the intervals of their conversation the older people heard fragmentary sentences about the different boats which had entered, and finally some remarks about chickens which arrested Mr. Emerson's attention.

"Bess," he interrupted, "if you are contemplating raising hens, right here is where you call it off. I won't have a rooster in my back-yard."

"Nobody said one word about keeping hens, Dad," laughed Elizabeth. "It was the terns. Amory is going to take me out in the *Whitewing* to the bar where they have their nests."

"All right then. I was merely thinking what your mother *would* say if she returned from Maine and found you had gone into the poultry business."

"I hate hens," said Elizabeth. "They are so absolutely stupid."

"How about your boat?" asked Mr. Emerson,

turning to Amory. "Have you never entered her in a club race?"

"Yes, sir, several times. The *Whitewing* has won two cups. I haven't time to go in for it this year, Mr. Emerson, and to sail a successful race in a boat of her size, one needs an able mate. When the *Whitewing* has been entered, Putnam Avery helped sail her."

"She looks to me like a fast boat. Her lines are good."

"She is a Herreshoff boat, and when Uncle Robert bought her for me she showed up well at her try-out. But that was a dozen years ago and they have gone on making improvements ever since. It would interest me to try her some time with the *Curlew*, Jack Howland's fin-keel. The *Curlew* is the same length but ten years younger. Some day we'll get up an unofficial race. I'll wait until Elizabeth has qualified as mate and then we will challenge the *Curlew*."

"You are making Bess quite mad about sailing. I don't know that I entirely approve. You won't get a boat out of me, Bess, no matter how you tease."

"Oh, Dad, if you only knew what fun sailing is! You couldn't help loving it."

"You don't appreciate my forbearance in permitting you to go with Dr. Russell. I wouldn't let

you if I didn't feel sure he knows what he is about, but land-lubber that I am, even I am convinced that he is capable of managing the *Whitewing* and that you won't get drowned unless he has gone down first."

"I can swim," said Elizabeth. "I really swim well, Dad, and there are so many boats about that there is no danger."

"There is always danger," said her father sententiously, "but that is the case anywhere, in a motor-car as well. When are you going to see the terns?"

"To-morrow afternoon," said Amory, "always provided that I am not prevented. We meant to go to-day but John Larrabee, Jr., fell out of an apple-tree and broke his collar-bone. I was obliged to leave Elizabeth in the lurch and go to the rescue of his frantic mother. John himself was comparatively calm."

The conversation continued general and Elizabeth took little part. She sat with head turned slightly from the others, looking dreamily at the sea. When the callers left, Amory accompanied them to the gate but did not immediately return to his aunt on the terrace. Instead, he wandered rather abstractedly about the garden paths.

"Amory," said Mrs. Russell at length, "I wish thee would come here to me."

Her nephew instantly obeyed, with an odd expression on his face which did not escape the servant eyes so tenderly watching him.

"Thee comes as when thee was a boy and anticipated a rebuke," she said with a smile. "Does thee think thee merits one?"

Amory sat down on the step and put his head on her knee as he often did. "I am not quite certain what thee is going to say, Aunt Eunice, but if it is a reprimand, I will take it meekly as thee taught me."

"Dear, I have no fault to find with thee, and I do not know if what I wish to say is wise, but I have had a concern about thee for some time, and I feel impelled to speak, though whether for thy good I am not sure. It is only this, Amory. I have seen thy growing interest in Elizabeth and thy enjoyment of her friendship. Thyself alone knows what is in thy heart, but the time has come when thee should know beyond mistake. If thee is not certain, thee should make it a matter of immediate decision. Thee must not hurt Elizabeth, and she has begun to care for thee."

There was a silence. Amory did not lift his head, but after a time he spoke. "Is thee sure of that, Aunt Eunice?"

"I know it beyond all doubt. I know because I love you both."

"And how much does thee know about me?" asked her nephew, looking up with an amused face.

"That thee finds Elizabeth a pleasant comrade in the outdoor things which appeal to you both. That thee shares similar tastes in books and flowers. That thee is interested and strongly attracted, but how serious is thy feeling, I do not know."

"Thee shall know now, dear little far-seeing Quaker lady. Turn thy ear and I will tell thee, even before I tell Elizabeth herself."

"I hoped thee would be pleased," he added somewhat later, when he had calmed her agitation. "And thee is not disappointed because it is not Phebe?"

"Thee and Phebe have somewhat the same heritage and experienced much the same training. That in itself seemed to me something that might draw you to each other, but, dear, I would love *any* girl thee brings me as thy promised wife. And I love Elizabeth dearly; I have cared for her these two years past, long before thee knew her. She has not thy inheritance and in some ways has been greatly handicapped by her home training, but she has very great possibilities. Love will do much for Elizabeth; she will develop nobly under its influence. I can already see her beginning to blossom as it draws near. I see but one danger in thy path, Amory, and that will come from a fault in thy own nature."

"What is that, Aunt Eunice? Tell me, please."

"Thee is naturally fastidious and that quality makes thee critical. I have had occasion, not once but many times, to bid thee consider others with more charity. Thee must never judge Elizabeth hastily and thee must be patient with some things that will try thee. Thee has seen only her sweet and lovable side, but the time will come when she will show thee the one that likes the barbaric earrings and the bad little French hat. And in that moment, thee must remember thy own shortcomings."

"I'll make a list of them and read it every morning before breakfast," said Amory whimsically.

"Thee will do well to keep them in mind," was the gentle rejoinder. "And do not be in haste to speak. Elizabeth is beginning to care, but it is somewhat against her will. I cannot tell thee exactly how I know this, but there are times when she does not mean to let herself love thee. Thee must be cautious and not startle her into repelling the slow growth of her affection."

"Does thee think there is any hope for me?" asked Amory humbly.

"Every hope, dear, if thee is discreet. Thee is not conceited, but thee cannot help knowing that Dr. Amory Russell would be acceptable to any girl."

I have noted thy recent patients and I am quite sure that some of them were not very ill."

Amory shook with laughter. "To think of thy knowing that! Oh, Aunt Eunice, what a wise little person thee is!"

"Not much escapes me when it concerns the boy of my love, but I should not have said that to thee when I have just cautioned thee against hasty judgments."

"Thee would not be the saint thee is if sometimes thee did not show a tiny trace of human naughtiness. Some of them were not ill at all and I had to struggle with a desire to prescribe some harmless thing which would have given them an hour or so of discomfort. Ipecac, for instance, would do no real harm and would relieve my feelings. But I did not.

"It seems very wonderful that Elizabeth can care for me," he continued seriously. "It must be because she knew thee first."

"I have nothing to do with it," said his aunt gently, "and indeed there seems nothing strange to me that a girl should love thee. My blessing and my hopes are with thee, Amory, and when the time comes for thee to speak to Elizabeth, she will listen. I think I will go to my room, dear. Joy can bring agitation as well as sorrow and I am weary."

The physician in Amory came at once to the front. "I have tired thee, Aunt Eunice. Thy heart—does thee feel anything unusual?"

"Nothing, Amory; I am merely fatigued. Perhaps in about half an hour thee will come to my room and read to me for a few minutes?"

"Ring for me when thee is ready and I will come at once," was the instant response.

No broken bones intervened the next afternoon to prevent the visit to the terns, nor did Elizabeth notice the slightest change in Amory's friendly manner. They started about four o'clock through a blue and white world, sky, sea, puffy clouds and white-canvased boats.

Elizabeth helped raise the sails and insisted on taking the tiller. "I must qualify," she said merrily. "I would so like to see the *Whitewing* in a race."

"Well," said Amory with a look of mock horror, "you will never make it while you do a thing like that! First, foremost and finally, *never* make the main sheet fast!"

"You weren't supposed to see," protested Elizabeth. "It was only for half a minute while I tied this ribbon to keep my hair back."

"Let me tie the ribbon or hold the sheet but don't do it again. That's serious, Elizabeth."

"Sorry," said Elizabeth, for his tone showed that

he meant it. "I won't do it again, Captain. Please don't fire me for the first offence."

"Immediate discharge for the second. By George, here's the *Curlew* this minute. Let's challenge her. Just toss me that megaphone."

Jack Howland and Todd Keith, drifting out into the harbor, accepted gleefully Amory's proposal, agreeing to sail a three-legged course, starting at the lighthouse, from there to the whistling buoy, around Green Island and back to the light.

"We'll have to be our own timekeepers," said Amory, looking as much a boy as the younger two, his hair on end in the wind. "I must see whether my watch is like Jack's."

Having arranged this point through his megaphone, he turned his attention to Elizabeth and the boat. "Ease up now toward the light. We can do it without a tack if we keep steady. Good."

Watch in hand, he stood till the boat came exactly abreast of the lighthouse landing. "Precisely four twenty-one," he said, putting it into his pocket. "What is Jack yelling? Oh, we are dragging a tender and we can't well drop it. We'll have to let that handicap stand."

Elizabeth, alert with excitement, turned over the tiller. "You'd better take it," she said. "I shall be sure to do something queer."

"Keep it till I put up the flying-jib. It's a bit

fresh but we must offset that tender. The *Whitewing* is pretty steady under both jibs."

Elizabeth had never sailed so fast before. The little yacht tore through the waves, piling them on either side her prow. "We shall ship some water," said Amory, after a glance at the low lying gunwale. "Any frills to be hurt?"

"*Clothes!*" said Elizabeth scornfully. "I don't mind being *soaked!*"

"We are pulling away from the *Curlew*. I believe I'll cast the tender adrift. All we wanted it for was the terns and we can sail round and pick it up later."

Jack cheered this reckless proceeding and the *Whitewing*, freed from the dragging skiff, bounded forward with increased speed. Both boats were flying before a strong wind.

The *Whitewing* rounded the buoy almost three minutes ahead of her opponent and Elizabeth hailed it as a good omen.

"We shall need the time," said Amory, "for this leg is a different story, straight into the wind."

For the next twenty minutes their progress was one of short tacks while the *Curlew* swept away on a much longer one.

"Either the *Curlew* does better on a long tack or Jack thinks he can make it up on the run home," Amory said in reply to Elizabeth's request for an

explanation. "He may possibly do it, but I think he will fall just short in his calculations."

The *Whitewing* was steadily beating up to Green Island and Elizabeth was kept busy dodging the boom and obeying orders. On one turn, Amory's sweater went overboard.

"Never mind it," he said as she exclaimed in dismay. "If you go over I'll stop, but for nothing else. That wasn't my college sweater so it doesn't matter."

Back came the *Curlew* in a long graceful swoop that brought her near the *Whitewing* and a little ahead, but slightly under the lee of the island. She came up with sails shivering and progress almost arrested. Amory jammed his boat directly into the wind, gave the tiller a sudden twist, first to port and then to starboard, and to Elizabeth's amazement, the *Whitewing* leaped forward and distanced her rival. The next second they were beyond the point and swinging about.

Jack shouted and Elizabeth waved to him. "But what did you do?" she demanded of Amory.

"Just a trick, like applying a spur to a horse. Jack will have to spend at least five minutes getting beyond the point now. Bully for the *Whitewing*! Once we got her tilted nearly on her beam-ends, with the centreboard almost out of water, but we let her go to leeward and the old girl picked herself

up and shook herself clear and walked off like the lady she is. Gosh! there goes the flying-jib. Here, take the tiller, Elizabeth, and keep her straight."

Elizabeth braced herself, both hands holding the boat on her course, while Amory walked out on the bowsprit, a perilous performance, to secure and fasten the flapping jib, with the *Whitewing* plunging him knee-deep into foam. Scudding before the wind now, her prow cut through the water like a knife, and clouds of spray rose into the air, to descend on Elizabeth like an April shower. The taut canvas tugged at the sheet and the rigging sang a tune of its own. Overhead drifted gulls like foam escaped from the sea. Elizabeth sang, too, a wordless song inaudible above the wind but one of joy and freedom. Presently Amory came back.

"Good work!" Elizabeth greeted him frankly.
"You are frightfully wet."

"You don't look exactly dry," said Amory laughing. "I usually wear a bathing-suit when out for scalps, but isn't this sport?"

"You bet it is!" said Elizabeth so impulsively that Amory only laughed again.

Having rounded Green Island, the *Curlew* was rushing after them full tilt, with Todd at the helm while Jack tightened a stay. By this time some of the other boats in the harbor had grasped the fact that the two were racing. The *Marie Jane*

obligingly got off the course, and the Palmers' launch picked up Amory's abandoned tender and was taking it toward the lighthouse. The *White-wing*, still in advance, came down the home stretch like a flying gull.

"Forty-seven minutes, eight seconds," said Amory as they breasted the landing for the second time. "I know Jack hasn't beaten that. Let's sheer off and get our tender. Head her into the wind and hold her there."

The motor boat came alongside and Brooks Palmer threw over the painter. "Great style, *White-wing*!" he commented as Amory thanked him. "How-do, Miss Emerson. Didn't know whom Amory had shipped for his crew. Some race! Here's Jack."

"Forty-nine, thirty-two," shouted Jack as the *Curlew* swept past.

"Two minutes, twenty-four seconds to the good," called Amory, waving his megaphone.

"I missed it beating up to the island. Try again another day, will you, Amory? Say, the *White-wing* can sail yet, can't she?"

"Let's make it the best three," assented Amory. "That is the only fair test," he added to Elizabeth as he made fast the tender and the yacht passed beyond hearing of the other boats. "If the *White-wing* can beat the *Curlew*, she can shake a sail with

the cup defender of her class. Oh, I knew the old girl had it in her yet!"

"I really feel horribly excited," sighed Elizabeth.

"Too much so to look at the terns? There is still time with this breeze."

"But aren't you soaked? Ought you not to go back for dry things?"

"I am practically dry." Amory felt his trousers as he spoke. "The sun and wind have done the job and getting wet with salt water never hurts any one. Let's head for the terns."

They made the sand-bank with less action by the way, for Amory took in the flying-jib and the *White-wing* sailed more steadily. The island in question was merely a bar covered with coarse sea-grass above bare wide beaches. Not a shrub nor a tree broke its barren top and over it sailed countless terns roused to anxiety by the proximity of the boat.

Never having seen anything of the kind, Elizabeth did not know what to expect, but she was amazed on landing to find that it was really difficult to avoid stepping either on the nests with their pretty pale eggs or upon the fluffy yellowish chickens which ran everywhere. The babies themselves were not afraid, being entirely unsophisticated, and Amory at once picked up half a dozen,

holding them in the crook of his arm and petting them gently.

“Why, can you do that?” asked Elizabeth, immediately scooping up a handful. “The darlings! Aren’t they sweet? Oh, go away,” she added to the anxious mothers, swooping close overhead and crying shrilly. “Terns aren’t gulls, are they?”

“No,” said Amory. “They are smaller and their feet are bright red. Gulls always seem cruel to me. Their eyes are wicked. These terns are more appealing. Look at this mite.”

The mite in question did not wish to be put down but immediately ran back into Amory’s hand and cuddled there.

“Cunning thing!” said Elizabeth. “Could they be tamed?”

“I don’t believe so. Put tamed a gull once that he found on the beach with a broken wing, but I doubt whether they could be tamed unless something happened to them first. The half-grown ones are already afraid of us.”

There was nothing else of interest on the island and they finally left the babies and their anxious parents and started for home. The wind was freshening still more.

“You need your sweater,” said Elizabeth. “I’m afraid you will take cold.”

“I almost never do; I’m too absolutely healthy

for that," replied Amory, "but I think there is something here I can put on."

He was rummaging in a locker as he spoke and presently fished out a dilapidated athletic shirt.

"If that isn't exactly like a man," commented Elizabeth as he pulled it over his head and then struggled into the sleeves. "When a girl puts on a sweater, she gets into the sleeves first."

"So she does," said Amory smiling, "but I have no back hair to consider."

Elizabeth was noticing the initials on the shirt. "T. W. H." she read. "Is Jack Howland the younger brother of your friend?"

"His kid brother. He was six years younger than Tom. Jack was a cute little chap and we sometimes let him tag along. Do you know him?"

"Not well. He belongs to the set just younger. I have been told that he was rather speedy."

"I have been hearing that," said Amory thoughtfully. "I must look after Jack a bit. I was too fond of Tom not to do what I can for his brother, to say nothing of the fact that I owe considerable to John, senior. From something Mr. Howland said to me not long ago, I inferred that Jack was worrying him. Later on, if Aunt Eunice is well, I want to take a week's cruise down the coast and I believe I'll invite Jack to go with me."

"Do you sleep aboard?" asked Elizabeth half-enviously.

"Sometimes, but we usually try to make a port where we can go ashore. Once when Tom and Put and I were cruising, I dropped the oil-stove overboard and for two days we lived on hardtack and cold canned stuff. I wasn't especially popular until we struck Boothbay and bought another stove. We sampled the ice-cream in every place in Boothbay, getting five-cent plates each time. Put asked one waitress for some water and she said they didn't serve water with five-cent orders. Put went into hysterics and we had to soak him under a pump."

"I just envy the good times boys have!" laughed Elizabeth. "You can do all sorts of things and nobody criticizes."

"It seems to me the girls have almost as much freedom in these days," commented Amory.

"Of course we have more than our mothers did. Now we have suffrage, we shall have still more. By the way, do you believe in votes for women?"

Elizabeth laughed as she asked the question, which she did in a very business-like way. She looked extremely pretty, wind-blown and spray-bespattered as she was.

"I certainly do," said Amory promptly. "I was taught very early the cardinal feature of the Quaker belief that all are equal. I consider women

entitled to every privilege men have and I believe them absolutely equal, except in the points where they are superior."

Elizabeth hadn't expected such a sweeping concession and was slightly embarrassed. "It is lucky for you," she commented somewhat vaguely. "I wish we had brought something to eat," she went on with a change of subject. "I meant to bring a cake of chocolate, but forgot it."

"We are almost home," said Amory. "Fifteen minutes more will do it."

Less than the quarter hour found the *Whitewing* again at her mooring. Just as the tender was being swung out on its pulley rope, the Jardines' motor launch went by carrying a gay party. They waved and called and Elizabeth and Amory responded. The launch passed, but voices floated back, its occupants forgetting how far and how clearly sound travels over water.

"Amory Russell is sticking tight to his aunt's apron-strings," said one. "He knows on which side his bread is buttered."

"Looks as though Bess Emerson would land him," said another. "She is out to kill."

It was impossible for the two on the beach to pretend they had not heard. Amory's look was inscrutable but after one stunned half-moment, during which she did not know where to turn, Eliza-

beth dropped her sweater and hid her face in her hands.

“Oh!” she moaned in all the pain of her outraged modesty.

“Elizabeth, come into the garden,” said Amory, picking up the sweater and taking her by the arm.

“I am going home,” she answered wildly. “Let me go!”

Amory did not loosen his grasp. The launch was beyond the boat-house now and he took her by both hands. “Come,” he said, gently forcing her toward the steps of Journey’s End.

“Let me go,” persisted Elizabeth, but Amory would not release his hold. He drew her into the lilac walk and down upon the stone seat where the lions kept guard. “Now, listen,” he began.

“I won’t,” said Elizabeth. “I won’t listen to anything. Let me go, I tell you. Oh, how *can* people be so hateful!”

“Why, look here,” said Amory, half-laughing, yet with a note in his voice she had never heard before, “just look here, Elizabeth. Don’t give them another thought. The casual judgment of our fellow-men is one of the things that matters least. We both know that neither accusation is true, so why let it hurt us?”

“But they are so hateful,” said poor Elizabeth. “Amory, *please* let me go.”

"When I get ready," said Amory imperturbably. "And why mind the hateful people when the people who love you matter so very much more? Elizabeth, I want to matter most of all. Will you let me?"

"Oh, Amory," said Elizabeth helplessly, and then she made no further effort to release the hands he held. He, too, was silent, caressing her brown fingers with his own shapely ones.

"I never made love to a girl before," he said after a pause. "I suppose I might do it better if I had had previous practice, but I love you, Elizabeth."

Elizabeth was silent, her head turned from him.

"It's true we haven't known each other very long," Amory went on, "that is, not in actual months or years, but time doesn't count in a thing like this. I made up my mind some time ago but I was afraid of speaking too soon; I wanted you to get used to me. But those idiots have made difficulties for me unless we straighten things on the spot. Consider, dear. I'm really a respectable member of society and the people who know me best are rather fond of me, and Aunt Eunice will tell you I'm not very hard to live with."

"I love Aunt Eunice," said Elizabeth irrelevantly.

"Ah!" said Amory triumphantly, "now we are

beginning to get somewhere. I love her myself and two things that are equal to the same thing are equal to each other!"

At this utterly illogical deduction, Elizabeth laughed hysterically and Amory took advantage by sliding an arm about her.

"I do like you," she began.

"Oh, Elizabeth," protested Amory coaxingly, "I know a word so much nicer than that. I said it to you."

"I don't know how to begin," Elizabeth went on.

"Why, don't let that worry you. I can suggest any number of ways. Begin by saying the nice little word and then say 'Yes'!"

"Oh, don't be ridiculous. I'm dreadfully in earnest and you must listen. I'm not at all the girl you think I am."

"A changeling, stolen from your cradle? A fairy's child? Your real name Kilmeny? No matter,—I love you just the same."

"Please be serious, Amory. This isn't easy."

"Forgive me, dear. I'll listen, but when you finish I shall probably contradict everything you say. What is it?"

"I'm not one bit like you," Elizabeth began nervously. "Now don't tell me that's why you love me. I only want you to realize. I haven't been

brought up as you have. I—I never get on very well with my mother; it's Billy and Dad and I who hang together, sometimes Marion. My home never was like Journey's End. It's always a sort of scrabble, just a place to eat and dress in, and all the real interests outside, more like a hotel. We girls never had any real education, only just to be attractive to men and have a good time and have it in any sort of way, just to do what the crowd did. I wanted to go to college and Mother would not let me! Of course, if I'd gone to Dad and made a row, he'd have taken my part and I could have gone to Vassar but I hated to drag him into it. It wasn't until we came to Freeport and I got acquainted with Aunt Eunice that I understood what the genuine things in life are. She showed me. I never had any ideals before, not high ones. I loved her and I loved the way things went in Journey's End. Over the other side of this wall, I'm a totally different person. On this side, it is easy to be good and to care about the beautiful things in life. On the other side it's very hard."

"But, dear, that's just what I am asking you to do, to come and live on this side always."

"Amory," said Elizabeth desperately, "I like you so much that I am unwilling—no, I will *not* say that word, at least, not yet,—I am afraid it isn't fair to you. You don't know what an utterly frivo-

lous and horrid person I can be. I have a fiendish temper."

Amory shook his head gravely and incredulously.

"I explode," confessed Elizabeth. "Now you never do that."

"Oh, don't I? Aunt Eunice will tell you that she has dealt with me in various stages of ill-humor. And it wasn't a week ago that I plain lost my temper with a woman who came to consult me professionally. I am hot under the collar every time I think of her. She wanted me to do something that was a disgrace to her and an insult to me, and I told her so. But I can't see what your temper has to do with your loving me, Elizabeth. We must only not both be angry at the same time. If we stick to that we shall not quarrel."

Elizabeth sat silent, a very wistful expression on her face.

"Amory," she said at length in a low tone, "I do love you. I don't believe you know how easy you are to love. But just because I do, I want to be perfectly fair, and I'm awfully afraid I'm not the girl you ought to marry."

"I'll risk that!" said Amory triumphantly. "Listen, ye little lions and all the blossoms on the trumpet-vine! Take heed, oh! asters and marigolds! She has said she loves me!"

"But I didn't say you could kiss me. Stop,

Amory, I haven't finished. How will you like it when I do something which shocks you unspeakably? I'm liable to. Sometimes I get into a mood when I don't care what I do nor what people think. I *want* to shock them."

"When you feel that way, come to me and I'll prescribe. The real Elizabeth is the one who thrives on this side of the wall. When you are here for keeps you won't shock me, you won't want to. I believe I know you better than you know yourself. Say the nice little word again."

A gleam of mischief crossed Elizabeth's face. "I love your ears, Amory," she said, "and your hands."

"Neither of which interests me in the least," came the disgusted reply.

"Your hands are beautiful," Elizabeth went on. "Even Dad once spoke of them. And your ears are charming because they fit so neatly and have a cunning suggestion of a point at the top, like a faun's. And I love the way your hair dips in a peak in the centre of your forehead. But I suppose you are like the man who said he was neither proud nor particular and if he was handsome, it wasn't his fault."

"Not a bit like him. I'm both proud and particular and glad that I am not physically repellent. That would be a serious professional handicap.

Elizabeth dear, Aunt Eunice knows that I meant to try to win you, and wished me God-speed. I know what she thinks of you. She will welcome my promised wife with open arms. And I will not have you feel that the danger of a mistake is only on my side. I have stacks of faults and you'll have many occasions to be patient with me. It makes me feel very unworthy to know that you really do love me."

"It's true, only I have warned you, Amory."

"We will love each other and the consequences may take care of themselves. And *now* may I kiss you, Elizabeth?"

CHAPTER XVIII

IN WHICH AMORY AND ELIZABETH FOLLOW THE PRIMROSE PATH

HALF an hour passed before Amory and Elizabeth came back from a country where Time is not, and became aware that the shadows were lengthening and dinner looming imminent.

"This really is not the way I expected to look under such important circumstances," sighed Elizabeth, lifting a tumbled head from Amory's shoulder. "What with handling ropes and tern babies and bailing the tender, my hands are black; my dress is a sight and my shoes would never be taken for white."

"You haven't much on me. I am not exactly clean myself, to say nothing of Tom's old shirt and my soaked feet."

"One reason I like you is because you are usually so immaculate," observed Elizabeth.

"That reason doesn't exist to-day. Let us come to Aunt Eunice."

"Amory, I am too dirty. Let me go home and

get dressed in something decent. I will come this evening."

"Suppose I come for you after dinner and see your father, and then we will both go to Aunt Eunice."

Elizabeth assented. She had been crying, but there was no bitterness left concerning the unkind remarks from the launch. She was unspeakably moved by Amory's gentleness and by a sort of reverence in his manner and touch.

"What shall I do if your father won't let me have you?" inquired Amory playfully. "He may kick me down the front steps for asking such a tremendously cheeky thing."

"I am twenty-two," said Elizabeth. "He really has no authority over me."

"What an independent young person! I don't feel afraid of Mr. Emerson. He has probably realized that he will have to give you to somebody some day—why not to me? Well, dear, we both are shockingly dirty, and I am most unromantically hungry."

"So am I," said Elizabeth, jumping up. "Don't come with me, Amory; there may be somebody on the beach. Come over after dinner and see Dad."

Amory let her go alone and ran up to the house like a boy. In the hall he met his aunt.

"Has thee had a pleasant sail?" she asked.

"But, dear, that garment thee has on—where *did* thee resurrect it? Do give it to Bertha to be washed."

Amory laughed. "I am too dirty for thee to embrace, Aunt Eunice," he whispered. "But kiss my lips, for they have kissed Elizabeth's!"

"Is thee serious? So soon! But I need not ask her answer; I can read it in thy face. Where is the dear child? Why did thee not bring her to me?"

"Because she is quite as dirty as I and in addition her hair is falling down. She is coming to thee this evening."

Amory delayed, making happy confidences until Lydia came into the hall.

"Dinner is ready, Eunice Russell," she announced.

"Gosh!" said Amory and bolted up-stairs three steps at a time. Lydia looked after him disapprovingly.

"Keep things back, Lydia," said Mrs. Russell gently. "Amory had matters of importance to tell me. He will dress quickly."

"Amory was never slow," observed Lydia. "I give him credit for that. Thee looks pale; is thee not well?"

"Perfectly. I was but taken aback for a moment by something Amory said, but it was welcome news."

Lydia departed, saying she would tell Bertha not to serve the soup, and Mrs. Russell went into the west sitting-room where hung a remarkably lifelike painting of her husband. She stood looking at it until she heard Amory come down, and when she turned away, her eyes were full of tears.

On the other side of the brick wall, Elizabeth washed and dressed in a sort of daze of happiness. When she heard Mr. Emerson coming up-stairs she caught up a kimono and intercepted him.

“Daddy,” she whispered with both arms around his neck, “after dinner Amory is coming to see you. Please, *please* be very nice to him.”

“Bless my soul, Bess—what do you mean?” ejaculated her father, but Elizabeth only hugged him and vanished without a further word. She was almost glad that her father’s partner was dining with them, for she did not want to talk of a joy which seemed larger than any words she knew.

When she came to the table, Mr. Emerson looked at her curiously. Elizabeth had inspected her ample wardrobe and chosen a simple white silk, made in girlish fashion. Her hair was bound with a narrow blue velvet band, her one touch of color. The radiance he had already noticed was deepened, and there was a still happiness about her which communicated itself to him. Elizabeth was more than pretty to-night; she was beautiful.

Yet she was very quiet and said no more than courtesy required to Mr. Proctor, though attentive to the comfort of both gentlemen. After pouring coffee for them on the porch, she excused herself and went into the house. Mr. Proctor would not stay long; he had announced an early engagement and she meant Amory to find her father alone.

Presently, as she sat by the window in her room, her mind filled with thoughts both humble and happy, she heard their guest go and almost immediately saw Amory coming from the beach, looking so manly and handsome that her heart throbbed with incredulous wonder that of all the girls he might have chosen, she should be the one. A great desire to be worthy that affection came over her. Elizabeth put her head down on the sill, and for the second time in her life, really prayed. She was still sitting in the communion of thoughts too deep for expression when a maid came to say that her father wanted her.

Smoothing her hair she went down. When she came quietly from the house, Amory rose and remained standing but did not move in her direction. He looked rather grave. Mr. Emerson continued to lounge in his easy chair and paid no attention to his daughter until she stood beside him.

“Did you want me, Daddy?” she asked.

Mr. Emerson gave a grunt. “This boy,” he said,

waving his cigar vaguely in Amory's direction, "says he loves you. Do you want him to?"

"Yes, please," said Elizabeth meekly.

"Why do you want to marry him?" Mr. Emerson went on grumpily. "Don't you have everything you want at home? What do you want to leave your old dad for and go away to live?"

"Just the other side of the wall," said Elizabeth softly. She understood her father very well. His gruff manner covered real emotion and the smile she now saw in Amory's eyes showed that his reception had not been ungracious.

"Might as well be the other side of the world for all the good you'll be to me. If you were my son I should approve of your marrying, but I'd like to keep my daughter."

Elizabeth smiled. Holding her hands behind her back, she bent forward to kiss her father's cheek.

"You'll not lose me, Daddy dear, and there is another side to the story. Would you not like Amory for your son?"

Mr. Emerson laughed. "I see it is no use," he sighed. "If you are set on marrying, it might as well be Dr. Russell, but I would like to keep my Bess. Why, you are nothing but a little girl!"

"Mother was only nineteen when she married you. I am three years older."

Mr. Emerson drew her within his arm. "It

doesn't seem possible. Just a little while ago you broke your doll and I bought you another. Well, Amory, you may have her and I will say that I'd far rather have you for a son-in-law than that cavalry major Marion thinks she loves."

"Thank you, sir," said Amory very quietly. "I shall try to be a son to you if you will let me, and please God, I will make Elizabeth happy."

"I believe you," said Mr. Emerson unexpectedly, and then he blew his nose and kissed his daughter. "Well, run away and have a good time together. Are you going sailing?"

Elizabeth glanced at Amory's immaculate flannels and at her own spotless garb. Amory did the same and both laughed.

"We are too clean," said Elizabeth. "You should have seen us this afternoon, Daddy, when we came from the *Whitewing*. I never saw Amory so dirty. I think we had better stay ashore."

"But we beat the *Curlew*," put in Amory, "and that was worth getting wet and dirty. Will you come to Aunt Eunice, Elizabeth? She is very anxious to see you."

"Yes," said Elizabeth, leaving her father and going to him with hand outstretched. "Yes, let us go."

"Good-bye," said Mr. Emerson, watching the two as they went, hand-in-hand like children. He

did not move until they were beyond his sight. Then he gave a sigh and turned to his cigar.

"I believe my Bess will be happy," he soliloquized. "For those two, marriage will be a taking hands and running out into the sun at the call of the sea and the off-shore wind. I don't think their comradeship will fail."

"Let's not tell any one else at present, Amory," Elizabeth was saying as they entered the garden at Journey's End. "Mother won't want my engagement announced while she is away. She'll want to have a big fuss and do things we'll both hate, but I'm afraid we'll have to let her."

"Of course we must consider her wishes," assented Amory. "But you will let me tell the Averys? It will go no further and I have been so close to them that it will hurt them not to know. They and my sister Caroline are the only ones aside from Aunt Eunice whom I want to tell."

"Of course you may, Amory. I only meant that Mother won't want it formally announced until she comes home, so it won't do to tell many people. I shall tell no one but Dad."

"One moment," said Amory, drawing her into the lilac walk; "come here and sit down. We can stay only a minute, for Aunt Eunice knew that I went to see your father and she will be waiting for us."

"No, we mustn't stay," Elizabeth assented, "only just long enough for me to tell you that in my turn, I will do my best to make you happy. I loved your saying that to Dad. And I want to help you in your work."

"I do care a lot about my profession; I want to make it a success, but you will never feel, will you, Elizabeth, that it comes before you? There may be times when it will seem to you that I consider duty before love, but in my heart you will always be first."

"I shall try never to hinder you," said Elizabeth seriously, and so they promised each other all the sweet impossibilities which Love suggests to every boy and girl who discover the path to Paradise.

"Gracious!" said Elizabeth at last, "we must not stay here; we must go straight to Aunt Eunice."

"Dear," said Amory as they rose, "I have a fancy not to give you a diamond. You shall have them later, but I would like to have your engagement ring after my own wish. Are you willing?"

"I shall love it, whatever it is and all the more if it is not like everybody's."

"It won't be," said Amory briefly and then they went up the central walk by the sun-dial. Elizabeth paused for a moment. The dial stood in a small round bed, its low gray pedestal rising from a mass of blue larkspurs. Later, its background

would change to frilly pink hollyhocks, for their blossoms were already showing. The years of lovely, gracious living that had characterized Journey's End for over a century had left their peace upon the garden also, the peace that only permanence bestows. The people who dwelt in the old house had known the dignity that comes from living in one place through generations, among books and flowers, in quiet ways and in the beauty of simplicity. The realization came to Elizabeth that Amory's rather unusual personality was the direct result of such an inheritance and environment. He would never let the dust of daily life blot out the light of sun and stars.

Year in, year out, had the dial stood under changing skies in the garden that looked on the sea. As month succeeded month, bitter cold and burning heat, frost, rain and wind had all left their touches on its bronze face and granite pedestal. Five generations of Russells had known the motto, which, with new appreciation, Elizabeth paused to read:

*MY HOURES ARE MADE OF SUN AND SHADE
TAKE HEDE OF WHAT YOUR HOURES BE MADE*

CHAPTER XIX

IN WHICH AUNT EUNICE IS ILL AND LYDIA SEES A GHOST

THAT night Amory did not go to bed early nor when he tried to sleep was he successful, but lay in his quiet room where the sound of waves floated up from the beach, very far from unconsciousness. His mind seemed unusually keen and alert, busied with many plans, in all of which Elizabeth figured.

Suddenly he was startled by a rude shock which brought him up standing. The bell connecting with his aunt's chamber rang.

Amory stopped neither for slippers nor bathrobe. He had had that bell put in lest an attack, which must come sooner or later in the progress of her disease, might take place in the night. The bell had not ceased its vibration before he was beside her.

The reading-lamp by the bed was turned on and Amory saw in the pale face on the pillow what he had dreaded. Mrs. Russell tried to smile, gasped and became unconscious.

With his other foresighted preparations, Amory

had not neglected to place in his aunt's room the remedy which would be required and to instruct her in its use. It stood there close at hand, though beyond her reach.

His fingers never trembled as he gave her the restorative, but his lips were set and his face almost as white as her own. After a moment or two the ghastly pallor began to change and the breathing to become more natural. Soon the attack passed, leaving her only a little exhausted.

"I was so sorry to disturb thee," she said presently.

"I was not asleep and, Aunt Eunice, if thee does not summon me whenever thee but wishes to be read to, I shall *never* forgive thee. Call me if thee but feels an ache in thy little finger."

"I wish I had called thee earlier," his aunt admitted. "Not that I did not do so the moment I had real need of thee, and I will always call thee, Amory; do not doubt that. But for the past hour I have had such a singular feeling, not physical but mental. It was distressing and it might have vanished had I heard thy voice."

"What sort of feeling, dear?"

"It is hard to put into words," said Mrs. Russell slowly, "and as I said, it seemed more of mind than of body. I had a sense of being surrounded by evil, nothing I can in the least define or describe, but

merely an enveloping suffocating evil. I prayed, and that seemed to lessen its weight, but it was something I have never experienced in my life before."

"Aunt Eunice," said Amory tenderly, "that was a symptom of thy approaching pain. A feeling of great depression often characterizes certain types of heart trouble."

"It may be as thee says, Amory," observed his aunt after a time, "but I am not easily depressed though I have known moments of discouragement. This was wholly strange. Something seemed near me which was alien to my very soul. I felt sick to the core of my being. It was not until I could pray that the horror left me, which it did like the rising of a black cloud."

"I am so sorry thee did not ring for me at once."

"But after the cloud went I was untroubled in mind and body until suddenly it became difficult for me to breathe and thy remedy was beyond my hand. But I am quite myself now, so return to thy bed. Thee is only in pajamas of thin silk; thee must be chilled."

"I'll get my bathrobe, but I am going to spend the rest of the night here on the couch at the foot of thy bed."

Mrs. Russell protested but Amory remained firm.

The clock on the stairs struck two as he entered his own room and to his surprise found Lydia standing in its centre.

“Amory Russell,” she said, turning upon him a pale face, “is Eunice ill?”

“She has been, but she is free from pain now. What is the matter, Lydia? Thee is as white as a ghost.”

“That is just the matter,” said Lydia, sinking into the nearest chair. “I have seen one.”

Amory reached for his bathrobe, put it on and stuck his feet into slippers. “Where is thy ghost?” he asked.

“It was at my window,” said Lydia, putting her hand to her throat and speaking with difficulty. “I sat up in bed and looked at it. It was a frightful thing with shining eyes. There was a light from them thrown on the ceiling as well. I could not speak nor move, but after a time, which seemed an eternity, it vanished. When I had recovered my strength I came to thy room only to find thee gone.”

“Lydia, thee has had a nightmare,” said Amory kindly. “Come, I will go back to thy room with thee.”

“I ate no meat to-night, merely soup and vegetables and a peach for dessert. It was no nightmare.”

Amory looked at her closely. Something had evidently frightened her.

"I will attend to thy ghost, Lydia," he said. "Stay here till thee feels calm."

Amory crossed the hall to Lydia's open door. As he expected, there was nothing visible to account for her terror. "She is not imaginative," he thought. "I wonder whether anybody could have climbed this portico and showed up a jack-o'-lantern or anything of the kind."

Standing at the open window, a slight sound caught his ear and he stopped as though frozen to the spot.

"Lydia's room is above the east parlor," the thought flashed through his mind. "That sounds like somebody trying to cut glass. I believe the burglars are back! Great Scott! and I mustn't frighten Aunt Eunice."

He hurried across the hall to where Lydia still sat. "Look here," he said in a hasty whisper, "I think somebody is trying to break in down-stairs. Go to Aunt Eunice's room, shut her door and don't let her suspect anything. Say thee is come to stay until I am ready. Now, Lydia, brace up and be a sport!"

Lydia threw him one look and went. Amory seized the telephone, gave the message to the police station, took a revolver from his desk and, not wait-

ing for the promised reinforcements, started for the front staircase. Half-way down, he tripped and fell with a terrific crash.

The noise filled the silent house like the sound of doom. Lydia emerged at once from Mrs. Russell's room. Amory at the foot of the stairs was muttering exasperated comments on his clumsiness. Fortunately the revolver had not been discharged in the fall, but the burglar could not fail to know that the house was roused.

Amory picked himself up, to subside at once into a hall chair, aware of a sprained ankle. He could only limp to the door to answer the knock of the police.

"We surrounded the house and somebody was using a cutter on a window all right enough, but he has made his getaway," said the captain.

"Due to my falling down-stairs with noise enough to wake the dead," said the disgusted Amory. "Just my luck. If that hadn't happened, we would have nailed him."

"Dr. Russell," began the captain, "somebody is after something here and it looks to me as though he was going to keep on with his job till he makes it. Now the next time you hear anything, telephone the station but don't try to get into it yourself. Stay up-stairs. Your falling was a piece of ill-luck that simply warned the crook. We are wise to the

fact that it is the east room which needs watching and we'll go straight there. What's that, Tim?"

"Give it a name," said the patrolman who had come around the house and who was holding in his hand a strange-looking object. Light came at once to Amory.

"That's a Chinese devil-mask!" he exclaimed. "Well, that explains Lydia's fright."

"Plain enough that the man climbed the porch and looked in her window," commented the captain when Amory related Lydia's tale. "If the room had been unoccupied, he'd have entered there rather than break glass."

"What on earth does any Chinese want to break in here for?" asked Amory.

"They are a rum lot, Dr. Russell; superstitious as the devil, too. If we could find out what became of the heathen who did the vanishing act in that east room we might find out why there have been two attempted breaks since then. We'll keep a watch the rest of the night. Given your ankle a twist, haven't you? You were lucky nothing worse happened. It isn't exactly healthy to fall down a flight of stairs with a loaded revolver in one hand."

Amory himself thought his escape providential but still cursed his clumsiness in making the misstep. Having parted with the patrolmen, he pain-

fully climbed to the upper hall, where Lydia reported Mrs. Russell sleeping peacefully.

"That's one thing to be thankful for. And, Lydia, thee did see something at thy window."

"I am glad thee is convinced," said Lydia when he explained. "Thee may be a skilful physician, Amory, and I think myself thee has gifts in that direction, but thee will never convince me that the meal I ate last evening could give me nightmare. And now, can thee heal thyself?"

"I shall try jolly hard," replied Amory, limping down the hall. "Will thee lie on the couch in Aunt Eunice's room, Lydia, since I cannot? I don't think she will wake or feel ill again, but somebody should be near. And will thee go first to my office and bring me a roll of bandage, the two-inch width?"

"I will do both," said Lydia, gliding down the stairs like a gray ghost.

Amory dragged himself into his bathroom, his teeth set, and spent the next hour in treating his ankle. Having reached the point where he could step on it without much pain, he bandaged it and went to bed just as the early dawn began to show beyond the lighthouse.

"The last twenty-four hours have not been uneventful," he thought. "I wonder whether I shall lead an equally simple life to-day."

CHAPTER XX

IN WHICH ELIZABETH IS SUPERSTITIOUS AND AMORY IS SCEPTICAL

AS had been the case with the previous attempt at burglary, the second was succeeded by a period of calm. The next morning Amory sent for an electrician and ordered a burglar alarm placed on all the lower-floor windows, a precaution which met with Lydia's full approval.

Mrs. Russell seemed practically herself again and gently protested over Amory's expressed intention to have the specialist from Boston visit her.

"It is unnecessary, dear," she said. "I am entirely satisfied with thee for a physician. And both thee and Dr. Camp told me this attack was to be expected. His opinion but confirmed thy own judgment."

"I want him to come, Aunt Eunice. Thee is so dear to me that I dare not trust myself with the whole responsibility. And truly, were thee a stranger, I should at this point advise consulting a

specialist. Thee will not object, since I so much wish it?"

"If thee will be comforted by his further opinion, let him come. I am only sorry that my illness should sadden thy first joy with Elizabeth, but joy and sorrow are very closely mingled in this life. My share in thy happiness is so great that other things seem trivial. But thee is limping; what has befallen thee?"

Amory thought it best to tell her. Mrs. Russell had never been nervous about burglars and she would have to know sooner or later, but he omitted any mention of the revolver. Instead, he placed the emphasis upon the problematic object of the robbery.

"I cannot imagine," said his aunt. "There are things of value in that room, especially the rugs, but Robert once told me that the more valuable ones were so unusual that they would be almost as difficult for a thief to dispose of as unique jewels. Aside from them I can think of nothing to attract a burglar. It is not pleasant to think of Journey's End being under surveillance, and I do not like thee to be in danger of an encounter with desperadoes."

"If I continue to fall down-stairs and warn them, there will be no encounter. No, my ankle is not at all badly sprained and I gave it such prompt treat-

ment that it will be practically well by to-morrow. I will go and telephone Dr. Camp."

"And ask Elizabeth to come to me, since thee will be making calls and cruelly bade me stay in bed. I shall be selfish, Amory; I shall want her company as before."

"I shall never be jealous of thee," said Amory affectionately.

"Thee need not be, for I trust thee will have many years with Elizabeth where my time is short. I am thankful that I have been permitted to see my dearest hope for thee on the way to fulfillment. I trust her mother will not insist on a long engagement."

"I fancy not, but I can see that Elizabeth dreads to have the rest of her family come home."

"She would like to take her love aside and keep it for thee and herself alone, and Mrs. Emerson will wish the world to know."

"Mrs. Emerson may not find a busy doctor an easy person to boss," said Amory mischievously. "I see how I can save Elizabeth by arranging my engagements to conflict with her mother's."

Mrs. Russell smiled. "Thee must not offend Elizabeth's mother," she said. "Patience will be necessary until she is thy wife and then thee can do more as thee wishes. I do not think Mrs. Emerson

will find thee the most tractable of sons. Thee will get on better with Elizabeth's father. But ask her if she will come and sit with me during thy absence this morning."

Next day the specialist came, confirming Amory's own conviction that there was no reason to anticipate another immediate attack. One might not occur for weeks, but excitement might precipitate it at any moment. He would recommend complete freedom from anxiety, from agitation either by joy or sorrow, and abstinence from all but the most moderate exertion.

"She is a wonderful woman, Dr. Russell," he said when the two men had left the big front room and were closeted in Amory's office. "I was extraordinarily impressed with her when Howland brought her to me the first time. Her calm was marvelous and equally so her determination that you should not know of her trouble. Howland told me the exact circumstances and when I saw Mrs. Russell, they impressed themselves on me. I do not consider her condition immediately critical; with care, which she will have, she may live for years. The attacks may come more or less frequently, but may not grow markedly more severe. In fact, the development may be extremely slow. I have known cases of this type to remain almost stationary."

He answered a few technical questions and then asked a personal one.

"Dr. Fenwick is a friend of mine. Aren't you the young fellow who refused to go into his office?"

"Yes," Amory admitted rather unwillingly. "It was a fine offer and I hated to turn it down, but you know now why I did it."

"I see," observed Dr. Camp thoughtfully. "Yes, I see. In a conflict between duty and ambition, duty won out."

"Not exactly duty," said Amory, with a serious expression on his fine face. "My aunt never knew of the offer. Had she known, she would have insisted on my accepting it. No, I cannot claim that I stayed from duty, for that somehow implies that it was grudgingly, but because my staying makes all the difference to her."

"You are a lucky chap," said the older man, with real feeling in his voice. "I have an idea that you wouldn't have made the record you already have if she hadn't put something into you. Love and gratitude are none too common in this world. Well, you can feel assured that your present treatment is exactly what I should advise, but if you want me to look at her again, call me and I will come any time. Luncheon?—why, if it is ready, I will accept your hospitality."

They lunched alone, since Mrs. Russell had not

yet left her room, but the conversation did not again become personal. When Dr. Camp went, Amory had time only for a brief visit to his aunt before his office hour. Bell had shown in several patients before he ran up to speak to her.

He stayed with her but five minutes, washed his hands in his own room and went down to his office ready for his first patient. As he came down-stairs he caught a glimpse of something moving in the east parlor. The hall was empty and Amory was not certain he had seen any one; he was conscious only that with the tail of his eye he detected motion. He went at once to the room.

Just inside the door stood a short man, looking about as though in search of some definite thing. When Amory entered he turned quickly and Amory experienced a distinct shock as he saw that the intruder was a Chinese.

"Pardon," said the man at once in excellent English. "You are Dr. Russell? I have come to consult you. Is it here that I wait or will you see me at once?"

"This is not the reception-room, but if you will come into my office I will attend to you immediately," said Amory, puzzled to know whether the man had really blundered into the wrong room or whether he had deliberately left the other. He would question Bell later, but no matter how many

people had rightfully preceded this person, he would afford him no further excuse for wandering about Journey's End.

The man entered the office at once but gave Amory absolutely no opening for any questions nor any ground for supposing he had ever been in the house before. He was well-dressed and a man of education. Amory was more puzzled than ever when he rose to show him out, which he did in person, preferring to close the front door himself upon this especial visitor.

He saw the rest of his patients, giving each his courteous and interested attention, but in the bottom of his mind ran a sort of undercurrent of speculation as to the identity of that Chinese and the real reason for his visit. The trouble about which he had come to consult a doctor was one that the average man would have ignored unless it became more than a temporary discomfort, and yet it was enough to provide an excuse for getting into Journey's End. Amory was not surprised to learn from Bell that the Chinese had been shown into the reception-room like all the other patients. He had evidently watched a chance to slip into the hall and down it to the east parlor, but the opportunity proved ill-chosen, since it chanced to be at the moment when Amory came on the scene. Bell also declared that he was *not* the foreign gentleman who

called some weeks previously and presented the letter.

The whole affair seemed no nearer solution and Amory really did not know what to think. Next day he had an errand which took him to Boston, and during his drive up and back, he considered the question from all sides. There were a number of Chinese in Freeport, mostly laundrymen, with the keepers of two restaurants, one of which was popular with the set of fashionable young people, but they had always been law-abiding and kept very much by themselves. Amory did not think they included any one so well educated as his caller of the previous afternoon.

That night he dined with the Emersons and after coffee he and Elizabeth wandered into the garden of Journey's End and soon found themselves near the lilac walk and the seat of the little lions. Amory's ankle was practically well, betraying the injury only by a step less buoyant than customary.

Having sought their usual resting-place, Amory placed a tiny package in Elizabeth's hand.

"The ring?" she asked, guessing from its shape. "I want you to open it and put it on my finger and I shall keep my eyes shut until it is there."

Amory laughed and opened the box. Lifting her hand, he kissed it gently and slipped the ring upon her finger. "Look now," he said.

Elizabeth opened her eyes and gave a gasp. "Oh, I *never* saw anything like that!" she exclaimed and then was silent.

"Do you like it as well as a diamond?"

"Oh, much better! It is wonderful. Marion's diamond isn't half so beautiful. And a platinum ring! Oh, Amory!"

"I have always liked sapphires," said Amory, taking her hand on his palm, "and I love blue for you. It is the color of truth and of hope and of the heaven above us."

"This is the loveliest stone I ever saw," said Elizabeth sincerely. "It looks like a fringed gentian set in hoarfrost."

"That is precisely what came into my mind when I saw it," exclaimed Amory, "a remembrance of a chill September morning when I found the gentians in a frosty meadow. I thought you would see the resemblance."

"Amory," said Elizabeth sometime later, "you have never told me why you remembered the blue dress I wore that evening at the Red Cross carnival."

"No," agreed Amory, smiling. "You see, those unpleasant idiots in the motor-launch precipitated matters so that all my carefully laid plans went overboard. But why should I call them either unpleasant or idiotic since they really helped me out?"

I will forgive them at once. Yes, I will forgive them and I will tell you about the blue dress. You remember that I impolitely overheard the palmist give you an excellent general character, and insinuate that you were going to have a rocky road to travel, and warn you of some vague danger."

"I'm not so sure about the character, and it makes me think of Mother engaging a cook, but the rest is all straight," admitted Elizabeth, laughing.

"When you had gone and I showed her my palms she looked at them attentively and presently gave me a keen glance. I am accustomed to note things closely and I observed that it was one of real surprise, not to say distress. Then she asked if I knew the young girl who had just gone out. I said I did not, that I had never seen you before, and never expected to see you again. And I didn't then, Queen Bess.

"Whereupon the palmist informed me that the same disaster that threatened you also threatened me."

"Good gracious!" said Elizabeth. "And do you believe her?"

"Neither then nor now. A scientist is the least superstitious of persons, and while I admit that certain lines in one's palm, certain physical formations, may indicate probable tendencies or types of character—for example, she guessed from the shape

of my hands that I was a doctor—I have absolutely *no* faith that she could in any degree whatever foretell what was to happen to you or to me."

"But it was odd, to say the least."

"Yes, I will admit that, and also that it interested me sufficiently to try to take a second look at the girl who was to be involved in my affairs ——"

"But, Amory," interrupted Elizabeth. "It *is* coming true! We, who never saw each other before, have met and become acquainted and engaged to be married. Don't say it isn't true, because it *is* taking place this minute!"

"But the palmist has nothing to do with it," laughed Amory. "Doubtless it was written in the book of fate,—in the stars,—that I should love you, but not on our palms, Elizabeth."

"I'm not so sure," she persisted. "But go on. You tried to find the blue dress?"

"I did, and could not, for you must have left the hall. Your face had been in shadow and I had no really good look at you, but I remembered your dress. To begin with, it was a color I am fond of—you must always have a gentian dress—and I thought about it until it became almost a personality in itself. It is so yet."

Elizabeth was silent for a moment. Then she turned Amory's hand palm upward beside her own.

"I don't know the first thing about palmistry,"

she observed, studying the markings, "and so far as I can see, the lines are not at all alike."

"I see some resemblances, but many differences, though I do not know what the lines are supposed to signify."

"I know it is silly to think it means much, but some of it is strange, Amory. She said there would be one strong influence for good in my life and that it would come from a woman. Think of Aunt Eunice!"

"There seem coincidences and I will admit that some of the things she said were odd, but let us not attach too much importance to chance confirmations. I believe, with Henley, that we are the masters of our own fates."

"And never the victims of circumstance?" asked Elizabeth curiously.

"We may be battered by circumstances, but never really conquered unless we ourselves give up."

"I can't imagine your giving up," sighed Elizabeth. "Whatever happened you would get the better of it. But what do you think is meant by the disaster that threatens us both?"

Amory looked at her, started to remonstrate seriously and then changed his mind. "Merely our getting engaged!" he declared whimsically. "The great danger was that you would refuse me!"

"We will let it go at that," agreed Elizabeth laughingly, but she was silent for a moment as another bit of advice from that past interview flashed into her mind. "'And when Love comes to call thee, arise and follow fast.'

"I won't be silly and superstitious," she went on. "Has Aunt Eunice seen my precious ring?"

"She has not. It was for your eyes first."

"Of course I must keep it out of sight until Mother gets home and the engagement is announced, but I shall wear it whenever we are alone together and put it on a chain about my neck the rest of the time. I had a letter from Mother to-day. She was pleased, but, of course, warned me not to let any one suspect until she comes."

Elizabeth spoke guardedly, for she had not cared for the letter. Yet in her own way Mrs. Emerson loved her daughter and was unfeignedly glad that from the standpoint of her world Elizabeth had done so well. Elizabeth appreciated the affection underlying the congratulation but disliked greatly the tenor of the message. Neither sister had yet written, and Elizabeth decided that if the opening words of Dot's letter showed her still in the same mind about Amory, it should remain both unread and unanswered. Marion would at least be kind.

"I had a note from your mother myself," said Amory, "a pleasant one to receive. I'm glad they

are willing I should have you. I hope your sisters will like me."

"You'll get on with Marion," and then she changed the subject abruptly. "I want to show my gentian to Aunt Eunice. She will love it!"

"*Like* it, you mean," teased Amory. "Aunt Eunice, you know, keeps the nice little word only for her children, for you and for me."

CHAPTER XXI

IN WHICH CAROLINE DISCOURSES ON DEVILS AND
AMORY AND ELIZABETH VISIT THE DUNES

“**C**ONGRATULATIONS, dear Amory,” wrote Caroline, “from the bottom of my heart, and thanks for your admission that she parts her hair in the middle, as you will remember I told you she would do! Never mind, brother dear; I’ll teach her another way to arrange it.”

“Oh, *will* you?” said Amory to himself. “I wouldn’t bet on it, Carol.”

“Honestly, I am awfully pleased and wild to meet her. I hope she is exactly your kind, Amory. Somebody who knows the Emersons told me that the girls were rather speedy, but, of course, it may have been the others. You and Aunt Eunice between you could love a black sheep into being a woolly white lamb, and the sheep wouldn’t recognize itself either, only I’d hate to have you get bitten during the process. You see, I think any girl who wins your love is a mighty lucky person, so I want her to be what you think she is. I’m surprised that she isn’t a Friend,—what will

you do with a worldly Episcopalian like me? Now, do be married this fall, and I'll come to Freeport and wear my newest gown, which is a great gown, I can tell you. Perhaps I'll come anyway, just to get acquainted with the girl who is to be my sister. I don't know much from you, except that she is the most charming person in the world, and that, dear Amory, is merely what *every* boy who falls in love thinks! That Aunt Eunice loves her gives me a better idea of her, because she must be some girl to win the little Quaker aunt's approval.

"I, too, am at a loss to explain the mysterious appearance and disappearance of that man who presented my letter and yet was not Yin. How unfortunate that only a stupid servant saw him, for Yin is quite adorable and you would have recognized him from my description. Yin has been here again this past Sunday, telegraphed to know if he might come. Jermain had his own guests and I was charmed at the idea of seeing my little Celestial again. I was going to write Celestial cherub, but feared you might think me profane.

"Well, Yin appeared and I saw at once that he had something on his mind, so I proceeded to take it off, being an adept at that. By the way, I will give Elizabeth some points on managing a husband. The main thing with every man—and you are no exception—is to let him think he is pleasing him.

self. It works with all and equally well. I made Yin think the one thing on earth that interested me was his troubles and inclined a sympathetic ear. I heard much that I will not scandalize you by passing on. But I discovered that Yin had come with a purpose and a fixed one, too. He brought with him a magnificent necklace of old silver and emeralds, a truly gorgeous thing, which he laid literally at my feet, praying in return that I would permit him the loan—he asked only that—of my jade and pearl pendant.

“At this point he became so tangled in languages that I was obliged to unwind him like a kitten from a ball of yarn, but I finally learned that he wished to try an experiment with it, after which he would return it. The necklace was no loan, however, but a free gift in return for the privilege of borrowing the pendant.

“I was interested, for this was a new experience. And how strikingly oriental! Had you or any other nice American boy wished to play with that pendant, you would frankly have asked to borrow it without depositing—do you call it collateral? But Yin looked at the matter differently.

“I toyed with the idea for a time before dashing his hopes by the information that I could not accept so valuable a gift from any man but my brother or my husband. Not that Jermain would care a rap,

but it is well to keep within the conventions. Some time I may have need of them. I told him that I could not accept the necklace, but that I would willingly lend him the pendant were it in my power to do so, but it had unaccountably disappeared.

"At this, Yin had a fit of some nature, which might have interested you as a physician. It was a fittish fit and sounded terribly profane, though being in Chinese I understood nothing but the tone, which was exceedingly loud and deep. He seemed upset.

"It really was the truth. The pendant has disappeared and neither I nor my maid can recollect anything about it. I did not often wear it, and may only have lost it, but I discovered that it was gone just about the time you wrote me of the Chinese visitor who went up in blue smoke in the east parlor. I have no real reason for thinking so, but it would not surprise me if a servant I dismissed about that time stole it.

"At any rate it was not here for Yin to borrow, and he took its loss seriously to heart. He disarranged his hair, and that, for a Chinese, is going far. I am interested in that pendant or amulet as Yin calls it, and in his theory about it which I wrote you before. Do you suppose that Yin has located the devil and wants to boss it? He would tell me nothing more and probably the next time I

see him will deny that he ever had any interest in the thing. I only hope on his next visit he won't bring his demon with him, leashed, so to speak, like a pet dog.

"With your scientific mind and Quaker training, you have doubtless been curling your upper lip most frightfully over my fancies, but cheer up, Amory, there *are* queer things and queer doings in this world. I could tell you tales, but if I did, you would say words Aunt Eunice never taught you and tear up this letter. But I wish we might locate that pendant and its accompanying devil. Perhaps said devil is busy bossing affairs at Washington. Do you think your attempted burglaries have anything to do with it? If that demon has taken up its residence at Journey's End, better exorcise it at once, though it probably isn't there, for no evil spirit could exist comfortably under the same roof as Aunt Eunice.

"To change the subject, won't you motor up to Cornwall and bring Aunt Eunice and Elizabeth for a week-end or longer? Let me know when and I'll cancel all the people Jermain has invited and edit my own list. I'd love to have you come and I'll be as good as gold if you will. I won't corrupt Elizabeth; I want her to love me and perhaps she will because I am your sister. I care a great deal about your marriage being happy, Amory; it makes such a

difference to one's life and there aren't many girls good enough for you. Do come if you can and send me Elizabeth's picture if you can't. Lucky Elizabeth!

“Lovingly,

“CAROLINE.”

Amory read the letter twice and very thoughtfully. Caroline's epistles always made him sorry for her, for he invariably read below their surface flippancy, as she doubtless meant he should do. This especial letter, with its affectionate messages, touched him in a tender spot, for she had never before admitted quite so openly what he knew to be the fact, that her marriage was unhappy.

“I wish Carol had some children,” Amory thought. “That might make a difference, for Jermain is fond of kids. I saw him with one once.”

A rather wistful look crossed his face for a second as he continued to dwell on his sister's letter.

“Of course I can't take Elizabeth there even if Aunt Eunice was in shape for such a jaunt. We should have the whole town talking. Send her a picture? I can do that, only it doesn't give the least idea of Elizabeth's vivacity and the way she sparkles and changes.

“Poor Carol! I wonder if it *was* fair to sepa-

rate us when we were children and bring us up so differently. And yet what else could they do when our parents distinctly directed it to be done? Suppose I had been the one who went to Grandmother Payne? I'll bet I wouldn't have studied medicine nor be plugging away in Freeport, diagnosing mumps and operating on ingrowing toe-nails. And it's equally certain that if Carol had grown up in Journey's End she would never in this life have married Jermain Chittick! And yet, as things were, nothing in heaven or earth could have prevented her from marrying him.

"As for demons and amulets—bosh! She is as bad or worse than Elizabeth with her palmist whom she more than half believes. Carol could 'tell me things.' I'll warrant she can and I'll bet she has been dabbling in matters she shouldn't, and I wish I had a chance to read her a brotherly lecture. I'd blow her sky-high. Poor old Carol! What a mess her life does look and she's only two years older than I. I wish I could help her."

For some moments Amory sat wrapped in thought, his face showing no indication that he had arrived at any solution of Caroline's problems, but he finally put the letter aside and took up another, one already opened.

When he laid it down his face was yet more grave, for it contained his third extremely flatter-

ing offer from an older medical man to accept a position on an institutional staff—an opening that promised a great future.

“It is easy enough to decide anything,” thought Amory soberly, “especially when one is under the fresh influence of a big resolve and in a moment of intense feeling, but gosh! how hard it is to stick to that decision on the dead level of every day. And to be misjudged, too, for they do misjudge me. Of course, Camp knows now since I told him, and I suppose I was a fool to let it out. And as for Aunt Eunice’s money, I don’t care a hang what she does with it, and there may not be any left, for I know the dear saint gives it away right and left. I’m thankful that whatever restraint has to be used is put on by John Howland, not by me. I don’t even know how much Uncle Robert left her, though it must have been considerable judging from the amount he set aside for that trust,—odd thing, that trust. I do want Journey’s End sometime, and that I know she means to give me. She must have a good income, for it costs a lot to keep the place up, and the house and grounds are always in perfect condition. I’d willingly share expenses, but she seemed so hurt when I suggested it that I don’t dare say any more. Funny how she can make me feel about nine years old again if she is displeased with me!

"I have enough of my own to run the house when it is mine and to take care of Elizabeth as she is used to living and, of course, my practice is growing. But it takes courage to turn down an offer like this. I ought to have more surgical work; I don't want to get rusty. We ought to have a hospital in Freeport; it's a town disgrace that there isn't one. Then I'd get a chance, but I think I can pull some strings so I might get a look-in, say once a week, at some place in Boston. I had some mighty valuable experience in France and I hate to let it go by the board. Well! I made up my mind to stay in Freeport, and stay I shall. I put my hand to the plough and I won't quit, but I wish I had grace enough to do so without looking back. Aunt Eunice needs me and that ought to be enough. *It shall be!*"

Amory slapped down the tempting letter and wrote a courteous refusal. Then he filed away both it and Caroline's and became absorbed in a medical journal. He was yet reading when a tap came on his door and Elizabeth looked in. He rose with an exclamation.

"Yes!" she said, with mock severity, "I invited you to have supper with me on the dunes and see the moon come up—our second full moon, Amory! And you never came near me, so I came to see what is keeping you."

She picked up the journal he had hurriedly tossed aside. "Gracious!" she said. "It looks fearfully difficult. Amory, do you mean to say you read medical things in *French*?"

Amory laughed at her surprised face. "No man ever gets into Johns Hopkins who doesn't both read and speak French and German, really read and speak them, I mean, not a mere dictionary acquaintance. There is my diploma on the wall, little lady."

Elizabeth laid down the paper with a sigh. "Do you really like to do it?" she asked.

"I speak French nearly as well as English, read it just as easily, so that isn't any hardship. As for German, that is essential, too, because although they are beasts, they are scientific beasts, and it is important to know what they are doing, and only the smallest possible percentage ever gets translated into English. You will see me reading these papers rather often."

Elizabeth still looked awe-struck. "Amory," she said, and her question was serious, "aren't you really rather unusual as a doctor? That is, are all men who start in to practise as well equipped?"

"Why, personally they probably are," said Amory, taking her as seriously. "Not all medical schools have so high a standard as Johns Hopkins, and it is one of the more expensive. That is where

I had an advantage, that I could go there. I am also fortunate to have had such experience during the war and afterwards, and, of course, I can make a start now unhampered by the lack of books and instruments which many young doctors can't afford to buy right off. I don't believe I am unusual in any way, Elizabeth, except that the question of money has never bothered me."

"I think that is just where you *are* unusual. Not many young men who didn't have to work would have chosen an occupation that meant so much preparation."

"You didn't know my Uncle Robert," said Amory, half laughing. "He was determined that I should make my life amount to something. I didn't realize it when I was growing up as I do now, but looking back I can see that his whole will was set on influencing me to do something worth while. I was just through my training when Uncle Robert died, and though he knew I intended to realize his hopes for me, he didn't live to see me do it. I wish he had. Perhaps where he is he knows."

"Of course he does," said Elizabeth bluntly.

Amory looked at her with a smile. "I hope so," he said. "Then you can stand the French and German papers?"

"Yes," said Elizabeth. "But shall we start for

the dunes? And will you let me drive you in my car?"

Amory agreed and ran up to his room while Elizabeth talked with Aunt Eunice. When he was ready they went to the Emerson garage and Elizabeth took out her little roadster. It was painted brightly and had a slightly rakish air which amused Amory. It looked as though of its own accord it would willingly snort defiance at traffic regulations.

Their plan was to approach the dunes at a different point than Freeport, and the little car soon covered the few miles. Following Amory's directions, Elizabeth drove down a beach road edging the sand-hills until the faint track ended in a gravel pit.

"Shall we be out of sight of the car?" asked Elizabeth, taking her engine key.

"Some distance away, but people seldom come here, and I think the car will be perfectly safe."

"I'll put on its red bracelet and then we'll be sure," said Elizabeth, diving into the tool-box and handing Amory a big red padlock, fitting the front wheel.

"I must get one of these," said Amory, snapping it on. "But if I do I shall be sure to forget it is on and what would happen then?"

Elizabeth made a quick gesture expressive of ripping. "Good-night to the mud-guard," she said

blithely. "Oh, isn't it wonderful here? I believe the dunes have an air all their own."

Amory took the lunch and they climbed a hill scantily covered with sparse coarse grass. From its top they looked upon pathless rolling heaps of sand swept clean and smooth by the wind. Not a footprint showed in any direction.

"People hardly ever visit this part of the dunes," said Amory, commenting on the fact. "I have sometimes been here for a whole day without seeing any one."

"You seem to know where you are going," said Elizabeth as he set off without hesitation along one of the ridges.

"I won't lose you," said Amory, putting his free arm about her. "I know exactly where I want to take you, and when we reach it you will think that you are on Robinson Crusoe's island or somewhere the foot of man has never trod. Will you follow?"

"Anywhere," said Elizabeth, and then she added shyly, "Even if it is 'beyond the night, across the day.'"

"Oh, you do read Tennyson, even though you think Arthur was a prig?"

"Did Aunt Eunice tell you that?" laughed Elizabeth. "I like the happy princess better. I appreciate how she felt."

Amory made an affectionate response and they

wandered on among the mysterious shifting mountains created by the many-fingered sea. Changeless and yet ever-changing they stand, advancing imperceptibly with relentless, cruel destruction of all land vegetation, though possessing uncanny plants of their own, sea-rosemary, beach-grass, bayberry, silvery-stemmed shrubs like ghostly petrified seaweed.

Sometimes the long sweeps of bare gleaming sand rose to crest-like peaks hard enough to walk upon without trace. Within their circles as they topped the crests Amory and Elizabeth found tiny ponds gleaming like turquoises, but set as no earthly gem and possessing no earthly color, since the heaven above lent them hue.

Absolute silence holds the dunes, the silence of living death, for the dunes live, move and have their being and yet are death. The scream of an occasional gull, ghostly cloud-shadows trailing the white hills, the incessant roar of breakers alone distracted the attention of the two. Not even their absorption in each other prevented their perception of the mighty dormant force about them.

Finally Amory stopped and looked expectantly at Elizabeth. They stood where one of the sand mountains dipped slightly to show a glimpse of blue water to the left; in the hollow behind, a jeweled lake reflected the sky; before them lay a lonely

stretch of beach with sullen thunder of crashing waves. Not a trace of human life was visible, not even the smoke of a passing steamer. A single sandpiper scuttled along the deserted shore.

Elizabeth did not disappoint him. She drew a long breath, waved both hands with the same gesture that had attracted his attention on Clam Island and lifted them and her face toward the sky.

Amory sat down on the edge of the dune where he could see both ocean and lake. Presently Elizabeth came and knelt behind him, putting both arms about his neck and her cheek against his. For a long time they were silent while the sea-wind blew through their hair.

"I think they like us, Amory," said Elizabeth at length.

"The dune spirits, you mean?"

"You said you were not superstitious."

"Nor am I. But the dunes are alive and very sensitive. Haven't you felt them breathing during this time we have been so still? Once, years ago, I came here alone and after an hour or so I was quite sure that only a thin veil prevented me from seeing the spirits that live just over the crest of the next hill. I followed half the afternoon and, though I never quite caught up, I could hear them laugh with fun. And once, very far away, I heard the sound of their fairy pipes. People come here—

I have known them to—who see nothing but desert wastes and desolate sand. That is because they are not in tune with the frisky spirits. I knew they would bid *you* welcome."

"They are mischievous spirits," said Elizabeth, smiling at his fancy. "Once one led me into a quicksand where I left a shoe."

"And didn't you hear him chuckle as you stepped out of it? That is the only trick they play, and that was before they really knew you. You wouldn't be led astray this afternoon."

"Are you hungry?" asked Elizabeth after a time.
"I am."

Amory assented and they ate their lunch, Amory gravely pouring out a little lemonade as a libation to the local deity of the place. Then they were silent again, absorbed in the wonderful purple lights that flickered and changed on the surface of the hills as the sun set, and the sand grew pink, green or violet with the altering rays. Even after the sun vanished the shifting colors stayed.

"This is one of the most wonderful things I ever saw," said Elizabeth when the dusk finally fell, the colors blended into gray and the little lake turned to steel. "I can hardly believe my eyes. Have you brought many people to see it?"

"You are the first and only girl. Uncle Robert has been here with me, and the boys, of course.

Putnam brought his mother, and she likes it as much as we. Aunt Eunice never came; it would be too hard a walk and I am not sure she would approve of the dune spirits," he ended mischievously.

"But your uncle did?"

"Approve them? Well, I would not go so far as to say that, but he smiled when I told him of them. Aunt Eunice never approved of fairy tales; Uncle Robert always tolerated my fancies."

"I wish I might have known him, but he died just about the time we came to Freeport. That portrait of him has such a fine face. He must have been a remarkable person."

"A personality as well as a person," said Amory thoughtfully. "It seems as though I miss him more every week I am in Freeport. I find myself thinking that Uncle Robert is the one to tell me whether to do this or that, and then it comes over me afresh that he isn't here to consult. Not that he was ever given to bossing me; rather, he tried to make me think my problems out for myself, but at a critical moment or when I honestly didn't know what to do, he never failed me. And he had a calm way of setting me straight that was masterly. I remember once I had been criticizing somebody without mercy and Uncle Robert let me have my say. Then he looked at me over his glasses.

‘Amory,’ he said, ‘if thee cannot make allowances for other people, thee has not made the most of thine own opportunities.’ Amory came off his high horse with a thud.”

“His portrait looks as though he might have been severe,” said Elizabeth, smiling at the story.

“He wasn’t. I stood more in awe of Aunt Eunice, and yet he had his own methods of dealing with me. I remember once that I had an attack of swelled head and thought myself pretty important. Uncle Robert brought a book from his study and asked me to read aloud to him, and I did so during several evenings. The book was a series of popular lectures on astronomy. Before I finished it I was aware that I was a very small and insignificant person in a world that in itself was of no especial importance, and knew it without being told in so many words. I am glad to remember now that I admitted as much to Uncle Robert. And, Elizabeth, isn’t the immensity of the dunes and the ocean like that of the stars and the sky?”

“There *are* times,” admitted Elizabeth, “when I feel as though I never wanted to dance nor do anything frivolous again, and this *is* one of them. But I can’t always feel that way. You mustn’t stay too much on the heights, Amory, for I shall have to come down sometimes.”

“It is true that our daily life has to be down on

the level," said Amory. "It is enough, isn't it, if we know the paths to reach the heights when we need their help? I'll help you frivol when you feel like doing so, my Elizabeth, but we won't forget the way to the things that are bigger than ourselves. Ah, here comes the moon!"

CHAPTER XXII

IN WHICH ELIZABETH LOSES SOMETHING IMPORTANT

WHEN the two reluctantly started homeward the moon was over an hour high. Color no longer touched the dunes, only chiaroscuro, shadows so black and sharp-cut that they looked like velvet; sheer stark reflected light.

"It looks now like an oriental drawing," commented Elizabeth. "I've always longed to see the sand-hills by night. I did start to come once on the beach road nearer town, but I no sooner stopped my car than I was afraid to go alone, so I went back."

"It isn't a place for you without me," said Amory. Having put on their sweaters and eaten their luncheon, they were unimpeded now except by a thermos bottle, and walked with clasped hands swinging between them.

"This is the seventeenth of August," said Elizabeth. "Let's remember the date and come every year on this day. And sometime I want most awfully to go on a cruise in the *Whitewing*, a real one, I mean, down along the Maine coast. Will you take me?"

"On our wedding journey if you'll marry me by the first of September. I wouldn't risk the weather after the fifteenth. Do, Queen Bess, that's a bully idea! Come on, be a sport. Let's get married next week and let them make all the row they want and then sneak down through the garden and sail out to sea."

"Mother won't let me," sighed Elizabeth. "There will have to be any amount of fuss and bother that you will hate and which will make me furious. I shall be in a horrid state of mind when Mother begins what she thinks are necessary preparations. I wish we could have only Aunt Eunice and Dad, yes, Billy and Marion, and your sister and the Averys, and just be married quietly and then go away in the *Whitewing*. I'd probably be the first girl in Massachusetts who ever went on a wedding journey in a middy blouse! No such luck, Amory; I know exactly what is before us and I shall be as cross as two sticks. I give you fair warning."

"But I thought a girl always had her wedding just as she wanted."

"Elizabeth Emerson won't. Mother won't believe that I would really prefer it very simple; she'll tell me that my ideas are sweet but quite unsuitable, and then go on telephoning the confectioners and the florist and heaven knows who! No,

I shall have to let Mother do as she likes with me till I am married, but after that I am going to belong just to you and Aunt Eunice and Dad."

"I can stand anything so long as it ends that way, but when will you marry me if not next week?"

"I don't know, Amory," said Elizabeth, very hesitatingly. "I—I won't make it longer than Mother decides,—that is, I think I won't, but—it frightens me to think of being married. This is so lovely now, this part of our life; I almost wish it need never end. Sometimes I feel so helpless and afraid —" She stopped abruptly.

"Dear," said Amory tenderly, "no matter how much we love each other before we are married, it can't possibly be so much as it will be afterwards. I know a doctor's wife has to share his responsibilities, and it's true that I shall often be absorbed in my work or have to leave you at a moment's notice. But we will snatch every chance to run off together and play. Your life shall have no burdens that either love or money can prevent. And of all men, a doctor ought to be a considerate husband. I promise you to be that, Queen Bess."

Elizabeth stopped short, with her face turned from him. When she looked at him again the tears stood in her eyes.

"Oh, Amory," she said, with some difficulty, "I

didn't suppose a man could understand—I didn't suppose one *could* love a girl like that!"

After a little they went on again, breasting the hills that lay between them and the place they had left the car. On topping the last rise they were surprised to come upon footprints showing that some one else had passed that way.

"Odd," commented Amory. "Perhaps some artist was out after color effects. It's most unusual to meet anybody on this side of the peninsula."

"There he is now,—see, across on the second ridge toward land."

"Looks like a boy," said Amory, "and we shall meet if we keep the same relative direction. If it is one I shall ask his name and hail him as a kindred spirit. Are you getting tired?"

"Not a bit. I could keep on indefinitely and I hate to go home. Was there ever such a summer before?"

"Not for us!" said Amory, waving his hand toward the sea, now withdrawing toward distant horizons, "but I suppose there *are* benighted people who liked past seasons better. To each his own. That is no boy; he is merely a small man."

"He has left his car near ours," said Elizabeth the next moment. "Let's go slowly so he can leave first."

Accordingly they delayed yet more, permitting the little man to descend the slope before them, but he had some trouble with his engine and just got it started when they reached the top of the last hill. Elizabeth turned away to the sea, but Amory's attention was attracted by the stranger in the car.

"Look, Elizabeth!" he said, "look at this man and see if you don't think he's a foreigner." Amory spoke in a whisper and touched her shoulder to attract her attention. "Gosh! he is a Chinese!"

"He certainly is," agreed Elizabeth. The moonlight fell full on the unmistakable oriental features of the man in the car.

"Come on, let's take a look at him," said Amory, starting down the hill to where the engine was fitfully turning. As he reached the machine he looked steadily at its occupant, curious to know whether he should recognize his former patient. So far as he could tell, the man was a stranger and he passed with a courteous "Fine night, isn't it?"

"You bet," came the slangy answer in crisp tones from a dapper little Chinese who looked at Amory quite as closely in his turn. "Which way to town?" he added.

"Turn to your left on reaching the highway."

"I thank you. Good-night," with a precise bow toward Elizabeth who followed at a slight distance.

"No, I never saw that chap before," observed

Amory as the car snorted into the distance, "but it seems as though I am haunted by slant-eyed Chinese! Never particularly noticed them before, never met many before this summer, and now they crop up on every side like a regular pest. Well, Queen Bess, give me the key to this red bracelet."

Elizabeth put her hand in the pocket of her smock, only to draw it out with a gasp of dismay.

"Lost it on the dunes? My fault. I should have offered to carry it in a safer place than that."

"Yes, I've lost it," said Elizabeth hysterically. "I ought to have put it on the ring with my engine key. It's no use to look for it. I have a duplicate at home but what good is it? Oh, what a fool I am!"

She sat down on the running-board divided between laughter and dismay, but the former won, since her companion exhibited no impatience.

"What an Elizabeth!" he said, making her a low bow and then looking after the vanishing car. "Pity that we didn't discover it before our heathen friend was beyond hearing. No doubt he would have given us a lift to town."

"What *can* we do?" asked Elizabeth helplessly.

Amory examined the padlocked wheel. "I can deflate the tire," he said, "enough to turn the lock around so that the point is inside the rim and then

pump up the tire. We could drive that way, but it would be bumpy and we'd be stopped the instant a policeman spotted us. Hard on the tire, too."

"I don't care about that."

"We shall certainly be stopped if we try it, and might find it difficult to explain. It's a heavenly evening and personally I'd like nothing better than to walk home, but we must see about the car. You don't want it left here all night."

"Let's walk back to where the beach road cuts the peninsula," he went on, "and find a house with a telephone. Could you tell somebody where the key is? Is there any one who could bring it to us?"

"I don't know where Father is this evening. He would come if he has to, though he hates to drive and hardly ever takes the wheel. How late is it?"

"Just ten."

"I'm afraid the chauffeur will be gone. We'll try to telephone and if we can't get Dad there is nothing to do but let the car stay where it is. Could you drive me out early?"

"As early as you say."

"It would have to be very early for I shouldn't want anybody to find the car. It is registered in my name and I'd hate to have the police get hold of it."

Elizabeth emptied the sand from her shoes and they set off along the lonely cart-path skirting

the dunes, over slippery grass and sliding sand. Walking became easier when they reached the more used road, but they passed several houses before finding one that showed both a light and a telephone connection. As they approached it there came the fretful wail of a baby.

Amory rang the bell and a tired-looking young woman answered, the crying baby in her arms.

"Yes, come in, you're welcome to telephone," she said, opening the door. "Lots of folks has accidents with their cars in that sandy stretch. Don't mind Albert; he's getting his teeth and he cries 'most all the time. Seems like I should go crazy to listen."

She spoke with resignation as she took them into a cluttered untidy sitting-room where a smoky kerosene lamp poisoned the atmosphere.

"You'd better do the telephoning," said Amory, and Elizabeth went into the kitchen as directed. She got her own home without difficulty and found that her father was out and with him the chauffeur, their whereabouts unknown. On a chance, Elizabeth called both the Yacht and Country Clubs but neither had seen Mr. Emerson that evening. Though there was a car still in the garage there was no one who could drive to their rescue, and she finally hung up the receiver.

On reentering the stuffy sitting-room she real-

ized that the baby had stopped crying, but was surprised to find Amory holding it and the little thing laughing in his face.

"It isn't often Albert takes to a stranger," said the gratified mother. "Usually he yells blue murder if anybody tries to hold him."

"The kids are almost always good with me," said Amory. "That was all you wanted, wasn't it, little chap,—just to have a fellow sympathize over that tooth? Hard luck in such warm weather."

"He's got such a rash over this last hot spell I couldn't keep him quiet."

"Babies need a lot of water to drink in a hot time," said Amory, still petting the rapturous Albert. "And an extra bath helps out, doesn't it, old sport?" He added one or two suggestions as to summer treatment which the mother received with apparent gratitude.

"You must have a baby of your own," she observed.

"No," said Amory, entirely without embarrassment, "but I am a doctor so I know about them."

"Bless and preserve us! Here I was thinking you just a boy, though to be sure not many boys know how to handle a baby. I made sure you'd one at home. I'll try the magnesia and thank you kindly. We've lost two already and so I get worried easy over Albert. Did you get the line, Miss?"

The last word was added after a deliberate look at Elizabeth's left hand, where she drew her own conclusions with eyes glued to the lovely ring it wore.

"Yes, thank you," said Elizabeth, coming forward from where she had paused in the doorway. "No use," she added to Amory. "Nobody to come for us."

"You're not far from the car-line," said the woman, transferring her wistful gaze to Elizabeth's youthful face, her girlish blouse and the narrow velvet band in the dark hair. "That is, it's not far for anybody who can step right along when they start. I never can, for I have to lug Albert. My man works nights, you see, so he sleeps day-times."

"We had better make for the electric cars," said Amory, rising. "And many thanks for the use of your telephone."

At the first motion to put him down, Albert's lower lip began to quiver pitifully.

"But I can't sit and hold you all night," said Amory in the exact tone he would have used to a person of his own age. "Just get that into your head. I'll tell you what I will do. Ask your mother to show me where your crib is and I'll stick you into it. Then you'll go to sleep, won't you, and let her sleep too?"

From his contented murmurs, Albert understood and agreed. Elizabeth stood watching, a lovely light in her eyes. "Amory holds that child as though it were no more weight than a little bird," she thought.

She did not follow into the bedroom but the reasonable Albert stuck to his agreement. Not a sound came from his cot, and his mother came out smiling as they took their leave.

"We will keep on walking till an electric overtakes us," said Amory as he swung into step. "And if you like, as soon as we get home, no matter how late it is, I'll take my car and you can get the duplicate key and we'll come back immediately. The only trouble is that we shall have to drive back separately."

"Then we'll drive quickly. I would rather have the car come home to-night if we can manage it."

Elizabeth was rather silent during the brisk walk, more so after they entered the rattling electric which overtook them shortly after they emerged on the highway. Before her eyes flitted a picture of Amory, strangely out of place in the fusty little sitting-room, and the contented baby in his arms.

On reaching home, she learned from a sleepy maid as she rushed up to her room for the key, that Mr. Emerson was still out. Amory went at once to the garage at Journey's End, sending a message to

Mrs. Russell by Lydia. Within ten minutes they were on their way to rescue Elizabeth's car from its solitary abandonment. As they turned down the narrow cart-path skirting the dunes, the headlights threw into sharp relief a little group of figures. The sudden glare caused them to turn toward the approaching car and Elizabeth gave a gasp of surprise as she saw that the three men were dressed in loose dark garments and were unmistakably Orientals.

They stepped aside as the car passed. Amory looked serious. He drove his own car beyond Elizabeth's roadster so that she could take the lead and all the way up the sandy track to the beach road, he kept almost dangerously close to her tail-light. But the men were gone.

Only to the right, Amory caught a glimpse of a light in a direction where he knew there was a tumbled-down shack, long since abandoned by the fishermen who built it.

"There's certainly something queer going on," he thought. "Now I wonder whether the police know there are Chinks camping in that old hut. It looks as though the man in the car came out to see them."

Amory was conscious of a feeling of relief when they emerged on the good road and could travel faster. "Not so much fun coming back as going,"

he commented when both machines were safely housed. "And I'm not sure that I want a red padlock. It may keep my car from being stolen, but what if I can't steal it myself?"

"I never did it before and I never shall again," said Elizabeth, trying to preserve her dignity. "Good-night; I've had the best time ever."

Mrs. Russell was in bed but not asleep when Amory came to her door. She bade him enter and listened with affectionate interest to his account of their adventures. After returning to his room, he recalled that he had not posted the reply to Dr. Mercer's letter and must see that it went in the morning. For a few moments he permitted his mind to dwell on that offer and then resolutely dismissed the thought. He slept soundly until nearly daylight when he experienced a distinct and vivid dream, something most uncommon, for as a rule his sleep was dreamless.

It seemed that his Uncle Robert entered the room and came to his bedside as he had come in life. He did not speak, at least Amory could recall no spoken words, but none seemed needed. He stood quietly, his beautiful aristocratic old face lighted by an inward illumination which Amory remembered even after waking.

But if there were no words, the message was none the less plain. Amory became conscious first

of a great and surrounding love, a sense of peace, and then a conviction that he should never again regret his decision to stay in Freeport. All other inducements to the contrary were of no importance and would never again appear worthy any consideration. Then in the dream, his uncle raised his hand in blessing and left the room.

The whole thing was so real and so vivid that Amory came to full consciousness with a strong impression that the door of his room had actually just closed. The dawn was breaking over the harbor, its rosy light drifting through his open windows and he lay entirely wide awake, with every detail of the dream impressed on his memory.

“Elizabeth said that she believed Uncle Robert knows and cares,” he thought. “I never felt anything like this before and only yesterday afternoon I was wishing that I could talk with him. If I took any stock in dreams I must believe that he yet cares for me and that he approves of my staying in Freeport. But I need no dream to tell me that. It was his legacy to me,—his blessing and his undying love. And without yielding to superstition, I know that love outlasts death.”

CHAPTER XXIII

IN WHICH ELIZABETH ACTS IN HASTE

WHEN Dot and Marion wrote, Elizabeth found their letters more pleasant reading than she expected and was obliged to admit that her sisters really seemed pleased over her engagement. The tone of half admiration in Dorothy's note tickled Elizabeth's sense of humor.

While Mrs. Emerson decreed that the engagement must not be made public until her return from Bar Harbor, she planned to cut short her stay and be in Freeport by the middle of September. Both young people, she wrote, must use great discretion until then. As soon as possible after her return, a luncheon would be given at which the announcement should be properly made. Doubtless Dr. Russell, or dear Amory, as she should now call him, was anxious for an early marriage and there existed no objection. Of course it would be preferable were the older girls married first, but Major Lewes was in the Philippines and Marion would not hear of Bess waiting for her. As for Dorothy, Mrs. Emerson was really in despair, for she seemed so

hard to suit and yet she received more attention than either of her sisters. Dot saw no reason why Bess should delay, so how would an October wedding suit? An autumn wedding was lovely or if it wasn't, it was most depressing on account of weather, but weather was always a risk. It couldn't be counted on even in June. The ceremony must take place in All Saints and she was already considering the bridesmaids and their dresses.

Elizabeth took the letters in good part, for they were affectionate and she was too supremely happy to feel critical. She smiled a little at thought of Major Lewes; he was such a contrast to her own prince of lovers. Could Marion really love him as she loved Amory? Major Lewes was fifteen years older than her sister, rather bald, rather weary, with the air of a man who has seen Life with a capital letter. Elizabeth conjured a mental picture of her prospective brother-in-law to compare with those of Amory, as she recalled him playing tennis, or that evening on the dunes, with his fine head and slender athletic figure clearly outlined against the evening sky. Amory seemed sheer muscle; she didn't believe he permitted himself an ounce of superfluous flesh, while Major Lewes already sat his horse heavily.

Elizabeth turned from the letters to look at Amory's picture on her desk, one taken in uniform,

close-clipped wavy hair covering a noble head, steady candid eyes, looking straight into hers, utterly un-self-conscious, though with the suggestion of a smile. The uniform became Amory, though of course she had never seen him in it. He looked like the portrait of his Uncle Robert and would, when older, resemble it yet more.

Elizabeth had another picture, too, one begged from Aunt Eunice, of a slender little lad with a dreamy, shy expression and a proud dignity in the poise of his head. That air of personal dignity was still characteristic, but Amory's eyes no longer dreamed. They were straightforward and frank now, the eyes of a man who has looked upon the difficulties of life and encountered them with a clean mind and a sweet spirit. No, Marion was welcome to her cavalry major; Elizabeth wondered how on earth she could care for him.

Amory was certainly the most thoughtful of lovers; nothing lacked Elizabeth in offerings of flowers and candy, and she appreciated the delicacy with which, until they were openly engaged, he confined his gifts to those which placed her under no obligation. He was always considerate, always gentlemanly, though he teased her mildly and was playful in a charming comradely way. Probably Amory could have wooed a girl in no other manner, but it chanced to be the only one that appealed to

Elizabeth. Had he taken the least advantage of her, frightened or repelled her in any way, she would have shied like a wild pony, but he was never anything but gentle, even reverent in his caresses, and asked them as a favor rather than a right.

Ten very happy days followed their picnic on the dunes, days in which Amory found time to sail, play tennis and motor with Elizabeth while neglecting neither Aunt Eunice nor his duties. One evening he took Elizabeth to dine with the Averys, who received her with an affection that touched her to the heart. She wanted them to like her and went with the intention of being her nicest self but found it no effort whatever. The same atmosphere that characterized Journey's End existed at Hillcrest, and in such simple and friendly surroundings it was easy to respond.

One night when they had watched the sun set from a height beyond the town, Amory asked her quite seriously if she would like to sail out in the early dawn and see it rise. Elizabeth agreed, borrowed an alarm-clock and met him on the sea-wall at an appallingly early hour. The harbor was covered with a white mist just beginning to curl lazily away and the east showed faint streaks of pink and yellow. The cool wind made Elizabeth shiver in her heavy sweater. She was glad to help get the *Whitewing* under way.

When they were headed for the outer harbor, Amory gave her the tiller and produced from a locker the identical T-shirt he resurrected on the day they raced the *Curlew*. Elizabeth looked at the garment without recognition, for it had since encountered soap, hot water, and the experienced hands of Bertha.

"You are cold," he commented; "put this on."

Elizabeth did so and he watched with a twinkle in his eyes. "Yes," he said, "you did it just as you described, sleeves first and head last."

Elizabeth laughed and looked more closely at the shirt. "How warm it is! Is this the thing you wore that day? But that one was *very* dirty."

"Lydia took it away from me and had it washed. Then she discovered that it was Tom's and said I must give it to Mrs. Howland. I said that it belonged to the *Whitewing* and brought it back. I know Mrs. Howland would be willing I should keep it and I cannot part with that old T-shirt because though it was so very dirty, it is the thing I was wearing when you first told me you loved me. Don't you think Tom would like us to keep it in our boat?"

"I know he would," said Elizabeth, and then they watched the dawn grow in wonder and peace, the whole sky sharing its soft color and glorious prom-

ise. They looked back to see it strike the town, illuminating tree-tops and hills, catching reflections from church windows and spires. There was little wind and the *Whitewing* moved slowly on a pink and green ocean.

“‘Love that is born of the deep like the sun from the sea,’” quoted Amory as he sat with one arm around Elizabeth, watching the red orb emerge from the waves.

Elizabeth was silent until it was well above the horizon. “‘This is another of your ‘big things,’ Amory,” she said when the lovely delicate tints had vanished in the light of common day.

“Isn’t it great that we have so many of them close at hand? Have you ever seen the sunrise from a mountain top?”

“Only in Switzerland. Everybody does it there, but never at home.”

“Some night we will sleep on Chocorua at the Inn of the Beautiful Star,—flat on the grass, Elizabeth! And we will see the sun come up over the hills. Now will you have some coffee?”

Amory was unscrewing a thermos bottle. “That does taste good,” Elizabeth admitted, “but it is growing warmer every minute. And the sun looks red, as though we should have a hot day.”

“I am commissioned to bring you home to breakfast. Aunt Eunice called me as I came down, and

it is to be early, so that is why I did not take anything from Lydia's pantry. I'm glad you are a picnicky person, Queen Bess. Some people don't like lunching all over the landscape."

"The rest of my family don't," admitted Elizabeth frankly. "Billy adores it, but the others can't stand it."

"I am going to enjoy having Billy for my little brother. We seem to have other tastes in common besides that of loving Elizabeth."

"You will be awfully good for him. Being the only boy and so much younger, he's rather spoiled, and Dad doesn't help matters much. Either he lets him do exactly as he chooses or else hauls him up for something that isn't serious. Billy thinks you are great."

"I mean to deserve Billy's friendship," said Amory, and then he took his megaphone and hailed a passing dory. Elizabeth handled the boat while he bought two great green lobsters.

"I suppose Lydia won't give them to us for breakfast, and it would take too long to boil them. Can't we have another picnic somewhere to-night and eat 'em then?"

"I'm good for the picnic and the lobsters but not to-night, Amory. There's the dance at the Country Club. I'm counting on that, you know."

"Forgive me. I'd forgotten that I promised to

frivol with you this evening. And I suppose that I'll be cut off with two or, at the most, three dances, because of Mrs. Grundy, and I'll have to sit and twirl my thumbs and pity the poor chap who is dancing with you, not knowing you are mine."

"It is hard lines," laughed Elizabeth, "and if it wasn't for Mother, I'd dance with you the whole evening and let people say what they like. They are talking anyway, for we have been seen together a good deal. I'll do it if you will."

"It would delight me of course, but probably we'd better not displease your mother. She's coming very soon now and then we can be openly together. It seems ridiculous to keep up the pretence that we are nothing to each other, and it grows harder for me every minute. Look out, or you'll miss the mooring."

Elizabeth's prediction of a warm day proved true. Immediately on landing they felt the heat and by the time breakfast was over, the air was stifling. Lydia made a tour around Journey's End, closing windows and blinds to keep the house cool. Elizabeth went home and to bed that she might be fresh for the evening. At four Amory telephoned to ask whether he should bring his car. By Elizabeth's desire, he agreed to let her take hers.

The Country Club lay some distance from Freeport, back in the hills, but commanded a lovely

view and was noted for its golf links. Even during winter it remained an active social centre, for its big rooms with their cheery open fires and fine floors were attractions that drew many an afternoon crowd bent on cards and tea, or in the evening for a dance.

As a rule, Elizabeth did not care especially for the doings at the Country Club with the single exception of the tennis tournaments. Her young life had been crowded with social festivities, and the real Elizabeth, the one who enjoyed *Journey's End*, found them unsatisfying, but to-night she was extremely anxious to attend the dance, chiefly because it was the first public entertainment to which Amory had escorted her since that Saturday night at the Yacht Club. Even though their engagement was not yet known, there was a certain sweet satisfaction in going with him, in seeing him in contrast with other young men and comparing him favorably, aware all the time of the beautiful secret which was theirs alone.

Elizabeth bathed and dressed in a glory of happy anticipation, said good-bye to her father, who was playing bridge with the Townleys, where four old cronies planned an evening together. She was just putting the finishing touches to her dress, one selected with regard to Amory's taste, when she was summoned to the telephone.

Three minutes later, Elizabeth came back to her room, and Sally, arranging its disorder, stood open-mouthed before the change in her face. Elizabeth looked like a storm-cloud before the healing burst of rain. Her eyes were black and angry.

"Never mind those things, Sally; I'm not going to the dance."

"Not going, Miss Bess? And you all ready!"

Elizabeth stopped short and stared at the maid. Then another look crossed her face, an expression it had not worn in weeks.

"Yes, I will go after all," she said suddenly in a queer hard tone. "But I won't wear this dress. Wait a minute."

The surprised maid heard her talking with some one at the telephone. Shortly she came flying back, tearing off her frock on the way.

"Get out my black satin with the henna embroidery," she commanded, pulling the pins from her hair. "I've got to comb this over again."

Sally did her best to help. In a quarter of an hour there was a ring at the door and the transformed Elizabeth flew down-stairs. Even to a maid untrained in nice distinctions there was a great difference in the appearance of this Elizabeth in a very daring evening gown of striking colors and cut, and the girl who, half an hour before, looked half-shyly into the mirror, approving the soft chif-

fon dress and smiling at the face so soon to greet her lover.

Sally looked from the window but the car was already out of sight.

“Whatever struck Miss Bess, and she looking so sweet in this blue?” soliloquized Sally, as she shook out the discarded chiffon. “And the way she’s done her hair and the dress she’s gone off in is enough to make any feller look bold at her.”

CHAPTER XXIV

IN WHICH THINGS HAPPEN THICK AND FAST

FAILING a sea-breeze, the night remained stiflingly hot. About two, Mr. Emerson was awakened by the faint sounds of Elizabeth's return from the dance, and found it impossible to get to sleep again. He tossed and turned, trying to find a cool side to his pillow, and finally rose with the intention of smoking a cigar in one of the comfortable porch chairs.

As he passed his daughter's open door, he was startled to hear something like a smothered sob. He paused to listen and the sound was repeated.

"What is the matter, Bess?" he asked, entering the room and going to her bedside. "Too hot to sleep?"

Elizabeth made no answer but lay with face buried in her pillow over which strayed her wavy black hair.

"Bess, what's wrong?" asked her father again, laying a hand on the shoulder nearest. It shook convulsively under his touch.

"Oh, Dad," moaned Elizabeth, sitting upright and pushing away her hot hair, "I have done the most *awful* thing! I don't know what you will

think of me, but you'll have to know, and so will Amory, and it half kills me to think of telling you."

"Well, you might as well have it over with," observed Mr. Emerson kindly. "I can stand a good deal. Do you mind if I light this cigar?"

"No," said Elizabeth, and then she was silent while he struck his match. "It is the worst thing I ever did, Dad, and you will be angry with me," she began miserably, when the light had flickered out.

"Have you and Amory quarreled?" inquired her father, settled at ease in Elizabeth's lounging chair.

"I haven't seen him since morning," said Elizabeth in a low tone. She was lying back now, a wet ball of handkerchief in one hand, every curve of her slender girlish body showing dejection.

"You haven't?" asked her father in surprise. "I thought he took you to the dance. Well, go on. Tell me what has happened."

"He did intend to take me," began Elizabeth. "I was entirely dressed and ready when he telephoned. He seemed very much upset and excited and in a great hurry. The connection was poor and I did not quite understand what had happened, except that he was called to somebody who was very ill and could not take me to the Country Club. I couldn't get the name of the person though he told me. I asked if it was one of his regular pa-

tients and he said it was for the first time. It did seem to me that he might say he had an engagement and tell the person to call another doctor. But Amory would not even stop to talk to me. He said he was very sorry to disappoint me and would see me as soon as he could, but he couldn't delay another second. And then he rang off before I could say another word."

"What next?" asked Mr. Emerson, for Elizabeth relapsed into silence.

"I saw his car go, very fast, and he did not wave to me nor even look to see whether I was watching. I was so disappointed, Dad, for I had set my heart on going with him to-night. And it seemed to me that he wasn't very considerate. I thought it over and decided that as long as our engagement wasn't announced, Amory couldn't blame me if I went with somebody else and I called up Clive Templeton and asked him to go with me."

"Humph!" grunted her father.

"Oh!" said Elizabeth with a little wail, "that is *nothing* to what happened later! Clive was delighted and came over at once and I took him in my car. I felt as though I didn't *care* what I did. It is all Mother's fault for not letting me tell people I was engaged."

"This is about as clear as mud at present, Bess, but go on. I'm listening."

Elizabeth spread out her soaked handkerchief and looked at it distastefully.

“I didn’t appreciate that by asking Clive I gave him a sort of claim on me and he took advantage of it. I see now that he had a right to assume that I wanted to be monopolized, and he was in a wild mood, and I didn’t care. We went rather far, Dad. I danced as I would never do with Amory.”

“I’m afraid you have been a silly little girl,” said her father reflectively.

“Before the evening was over I was ashamed but I couldn’t manage Clive as well as usual. Finally I insisted on coming home. He sulked but gave in at last. It was about one and because there were few cars out I drove pretty fast. Clive was acting like an idiot and I wanted to get rid of him. Just as we came into the square, he tried to kiss me.”

Elizabeth stopped short.

“Well, what did you smash?” asked her father.

“I jerked away from him,” confessed Elizabeth, “and somehow jerked the wheel as well and we plunged directly into the drug-store window. There was a fearful crash and Clive went over the side of the car.”

“I hope he broke his neck,” said Mr. Emerson vindictively.

“No such luck,” sighed Elizabeth. “The next I knew there were men about and two policemen.

The druggist plastered Clive up; he got some cuts but not serious ones. I wasn't hurt at all. It is a miracle how we could have made such a smash and not been cut to pieces. The drug-store window is wrecked, the car is in Prince's garage with the lamps and right wheel-guard and radiator stove in, and I am under orders to appear before a magistrate to-morrow at ten,—to-day, I mean,—to answer a charge of reckless driving."

With the last words she buried her face in the pillow. Her father surveyed her thoughtfully and had Elizabeth been able to see his face in the dim room she would have read about his mouth a slight expression of amusement.

"You are a naughty girl, Bess," he said at length, "and I think you got what you deserved. I will go to court with you and I will pay the fine and settle the damage to the drug-store, although that may come out of the insurance company, but you can pay for repairing your car from your own allowance. And you will have to square yourself with Amory; no one can do that for you."

Elizabeth sat up with a despairing wave of her hands. "You are too good to me, Dad," she said tearfully. "I don't deserve it. But the very thought of Amory's knowing makes me sick all over. I can't bear it! What *shall* I say to him?"

"If you take my advice, you'll tell him the un-

varnished truth. I don't think he'll stand for anything else."

"But what *will* he think of me?" moaned poor Elizabeth.

"That is your worst punishment, my little girl," said her father affectionately. "You won't have an enjoyable quarter of an hour. But Amory is big enough to forgive you though he won't be human if he isn't angry. By the way, I can tell you for whom he left you in the lurch and it's a pity you didn't understand when he told you. I heard just as I was coming home. Henry Avery was taken with acute indigestion or ptomaine poisoning or something of that kind and he had a mighty close call."

"*Mr. Avery!*" exclaimed Elizabeth. "That is the last straw! Oh, if I had only understood the name! Of course Amory had to go; he thinks everything of the Averys. What a selfish beast he must believe me! Daddy, that really *is* more than I can bear!"

Elizabeth relapsed into helpless tears and would be comforted by nothing.

"Where do you keep your handkerchiefs?" Mr. Emerson finally asked, blundering about her dressing-table. "In this basket thing? Here, take this. Now I am going down to the pantry and see if I can rustle some iced lemonade. While I am gone,

Bess, I wish you'd get up and take a cold bath. This is a bad mess, I admit, but I can't see that crying will mend matters and you'll make yourself sick. Be a sport and take all that's coming to you."

"It will be in the papers to-morrow," sobbed Elizabeth, grasping the welcome handkerchief. "Two reporters turned up."

Mr. Emerson frowned. He had forgotten this unpleasant probability.

"Well, I'll stand by you," he said after muttering something that sounded profane. "I'll do everything I can to help, and just to please me, won't you stop crying?"

"I'll try," choked Elizabeth, and during her father's absence she did get up and take a cold shower and braid her disordered hair. When he returned with two glasses tinkling invitingly, she was again in bed and quite calm.

"There," he said, "drink this and then kiss me and go to sleep."

Elizabeth obeyed the first and second injunctions but found the third impossible. She lay until daylight with burning eyes wide open, though bravely resisting the inclination to further tears.

She heard nothing at all from Amory, which was not surprising, since he remained by Mr. Avery's side till six in the morning, and then he supposed

her asleep and did not think of calling her. He went to bed in Putnam's room so completely worn out that Mrs. Avery had not wakened him at the hour when Elizabeth and her father started for court.

Elizabeth showed surprisingly little trace of her past emotion. The curious observers in the court-room, the reporters who had turned up because of the prominence of the young people involved, saw nothing of her face, for she had put on a figured white veil, almost opaque.

The magistrate was considerate though stern. He called Elizabeth to his desk and conducted his examination in a low tone of voice.

“How fast were you driving, Miss Emerson?” he inquired when the police officers and the druggist had given their versions of the story.

“I don’t precisely know. It was faster than I should have done had there been more traffic on the street.”

“But you were exceeding the legal limit for the town?”

Elizabeth frankly admitted it.

“Did you have your car under control?”

“I did,” she answered, not seeing where his queries were tending.

“Will you kindly put up your veil? Now,” he went on, as she reluctantly complied, “if you had

control of your car how did it happen that you so suddenly lost it? The witnesses agree that though traveling fast the car was going straight until it reached Tracy's corner when it turned at an acute angle. What happened?"

"My companion did something that startled me," Elizabeth replied almost inaudibly.

"And what did he do?" asked the judge.

Elizabeth glanced appealingly at her father who looked grim and forbidding. Then a flash of her usual spirit returned. "I don't think I am obliged to tell you," she said quietly, "and no gentleman would insist on an answer."

The judge smiled in spite of himself. "We will waive the question," he said. "The maximum fine, Miss Emerson, and a second arrest for speeding will mean the revocation of your license."

Mr. Emerson took out a roll of bills and paid the fine. Elizabeth pulled down her veil and they left the court-room and went out to the waiting car.

"Drop me at the office, John," said her father, "and then take Miss Elizabeth home. Do you want John to go round to Prince's and see what the damage to your machine amounts to?" he added to his daughter.

"Perhaps he had better," agreed Elizabeth, biting her lips to keep back the tears. "Will you be home for luncheon?"

"No, I am going to Boston and I may not be back even for dinner, but I will telephone you if I find I cannot come. Stop here, John; there's a man I want to see. Good-bye, Bess; better take a nap if you can snatch one."

After a struggle with her pride, Elizabeth telephoned to Journey's End intending to confess the whole affair to Amory, but learned from Lydia that he was still at Hillcrest and would be wakened only in time to come home for his office hour. The tears came as Elizabeth hung up the receiver. She would have no chance to tell him now until late in the afternoon.

"What beastly luck!" she thought. "Every possible thing is going wrong with me. I believe a jinx has camped on my trail."

Clive telephoned but Elizabeth refused to speak to him. She lay on the couch in her room, the gentian-colored ring pressed comfortingly against her cheek. No doubt Amory would be angry with her, but in the end he would forgive her and she longed for that moment.

Jinx or mere bad luck, it was certainly unfortunate that her sincere intention to confess was postponed. Amory heard the news from other lips than hers and from more than one source.

Mrs. Avery gave him luncheon and after a final visit to Uncle Henry, white, wan, but entirely out of

danger, Amory drove home, stopping for an errand at Tracy's drug-store where the wrecked window could not fail to catch his eye. To a query as to the cause, Amory heard a tale which gave him keen distress. To hear Elizabeth's name coupled with that of Clive Templeton, and both involved in a discreditable accident, was sufficiently painful without the numerous highly colored details thrown in by druggist and bystanders. He kept both face and manner under control and no one could guess that he had any personal interest in the affair, but as he went out to his car, his lips were sternly set. While he did not credit all the details profusely furnished, there was only too much that he feared was true.

Before reaching home he was stopped by Brooks Palmer, who laughingly asked whether he knew that Bess Emerson had broken loose again. Aunt Eunice, however, seemed to have heard nothing and to be concerned only for the Averys. Amory answered her questions and then turned to his next duty, hoping that his patients would not be numerous. He was yet tired from his night's vigil and to hear these tales of Elizabeth was far from easy or pleasant.

Two of his patients brought him varied versions of the same and though he did not in the least encourage or even respond to their gossip, he was

forced to acknowledge to himself, with real sadness, that they seemed glad to speak ill of Elizabeth. This realization came to him with a shock.

Having shown out the second tattling old lady, who considered as she walked away that Dr. Russell's manner was not so engaging as reported, Amory looked into the waiting-room, supposing it to be empty, but found one more person to see him.

The first glance brought a feeling of surprise, for he was Amory's second Chinese patient, but it was followed by one of interest, for the man was in pain.

Unlike his previous caller, he was neither well-dressed nor well-educated, but elderly, worn, and with a face that told of privation and hardship. He did not even speak English except brokenly, but few words were needed to explain the hand which he drew from a covering handkerchief, swollen and angry with a serious infection which had begun as a painful felon.

Amory worked for half an hour, applying a local anesthetic, lancing, dressing, bandaging, every motion sure and certain. His caller watched in silence, with inscrutable eyes bent on his own toil-worn fingers and Amory's delicate sensitive ones.

“How much?” he asked abruptly when the operation was completed.

Amory gave him another glance. He might or

might not have a fat bank account, one could never tell, but his clothes indicated extreme poverty, and his face suffering of some kind.

"That's all right," he said pleasantly. "We will call it even. If it gets painful again, come back and let me see it. And you must keep it clean, *clean*, you understand. I will give you some disinfectant."

The man took the bottle but after listening to the directions, yet lingered.

"You'll be all right now," said Amory in a tone of dismissal. He was desperately weary and wanted to be alone.

The man thanked him and started to go. At the door he hesitated and half turned. "You good to me," he said abruptly. "You know about Tong?"

"Tong?" queried Amory. "Is he some Chinaman?"

His visitor looked around half-fearfully, and made a curious motion in the air, reminding Amory of the familiar Italian gesture against the evil eye. "Not man," he said in a low tone. "You look out for Tong. Tong very strong. Not mean to hurt anybody unless you get in way. Better take care."

"Look here," said Amory, interested but puzzled, "what are you driving at, brother? Do you know anything about the Chinese callers we have already had?"

The face of his visitor became inscrutable. "Not know anything," he said blandly. "Better let Tong take it. Have it anyway. Good-bye, velly kind doctor."

He was gone almost before he stopped speaking. Under other circumstances this conversation would have interested Amory immensely, but his mind was too full of Elizabeth to pay much attention to it. He tucked it away as something to consider later, but as he cleaned the instruments just used he was thinking of her.

Before he finished, Bell knocked and came in. "Miss Emerson is in the east parlor," she said. "She wants to see you when it is convenient."

"Tell her I will be there immediately. Where is my aunt?"

"Mrs. Russell hasn't come down-stairs yet."

Amory put away his instruments and washed his hands. He felt sure the interview was going to be trying and his great love for Elizabeth did not prevent his feeling critical over her indiscretion, annoyed because she had made herself so conspicuous.

When he entered the east parlor, she stood almost in its centre, looking so woe-begone and wretched that Amory completely forgot his indignation and started to take her in his arms. Elizabeth waved him back and thereby made her first mis-

take. "Don't touch me," she said. "Don't come near me. Sit down over there."

She spoke imperiously and the tone hurt Amory. "I shall not sit unless you do," he said.

Elizabeth flung herself into a chair on the opposite side of the room. "Have you heard?" she demanded.

"About your accident last night? Yes, from several sources, but I am waiting to hear from you what really happened. I'm unspeakably thankful you weren't hurt."

Elizabeth told her story, not sparing herself in the least, and her curt sentences made her appear unfeeling. The truth was worse than Amory anticipated and when she finished he looked white. She stated the bald facts and did not add a single word of regret or penitence, which was her second mistake. At one syllable of the kind, Amory would have crossed the room at once, but her voice and attitude were defiant, more so than Elizabeth realized. She did not understand that his absolute quietness was the direct result of her own manner.

"I am sorry," he said at length. "I suppose you had a perfect right to go with Templeton since I could not take you. Had it been any one but Uncle Henry —"

Amory stopped. Half the night he had fought single-handed with a grim adversary for Henry

Avery's life and the recollection of that conflict made the dance at the Country Club appear trivial.

"I did not understand who was ill," said Elizabeth. "Of course you had to go."

"Yes," assented Amory and again he stopped, for she had spoken even those words ungraciously. After a pause he went on. "Is there really any need of our discussing the matter, Elizabeth? If you wanted to go to the dance badly enough to ask Templeton to take you, and if you really like the sort of things it involved, I don't believe there is very much to be said."

Elizabeth flared up. "Do you mean to say you don't *care* what I do?"

"Of course I care. You seem to be the one who does not."

Amory was angry but poor Elizabeth did not know it. Accustomed to a family which spoke its mind openly and irritably whenever annoyed, she did not appreciate that his quiet manner and white face indicated any special feeling. She thought him cold and he was, but not through indifference.

"Had our engagement been announced, I would not have gone. I thought since no one knew, there was no harm."

"I understand that," said Amory quietly. "That *was* all right. What I don't understand is your permitting Templeton to take such liberties."

"*Permit* him? It was trying to stop him that made me wreck the car."

"Before that—during the dance."

Elizabeth looked at him angrily. "I told you we made ourselves conspicuous."

"So I heard," said Amory wearily. More than one description of that dance had come to his ears. "Let's not talk about it, Elizabeth," he said, rising as he spoke.

"I can't leave it here," she began, and then stung by his very calm, said much more than she meant, losing her temper completely as she made no impression whatever upon his apparent composure. She stopped abruptly in the middle of an angry speech when Mrs. Russell suddenly entered the room, the evening paper crushed in one hand. Her face was pale and her manner agitated.

"Amory!" she exclaimed, looking from one to the other. "My poor Elizabeth!"

She caught her breath sharply and wavered. With two steps Amory was at her side and saved her from falling. "It wanted only this!" he muttered.

On the front page of the paper as it dropped to the floor, Elizabeth caught a glimpse of her own likeness.

CHAPTER XXV

IN WHICH AUNT EUNICE CONSIDERS AMORY STUBBORN

AN hour later Amory sat beside his aunt as she lay on the couch in the west sitting-room. She was practically herself again, for the seizure, while more sudden, had not been so acute as the previous one. Now she was perfectly calm and wished to talk, a desire from which her nephew dissuaded her.

During those first anxious moments Amory had been conscious of Elizabeth's agonized face as she tried to render assistance, but only as an accessory in the background, for every power of his being was concentrated on Mrs. Russell. He really could not say at what point Elizabeth disappeared, though he thought it was not until his aunt became conscious. At any rate she was gone.

He sat stroking gently the hand he held, his eyes bent on the sweet face before him.

"Would thee like me to carry thee to thy room?" he asked at length, "or is thee equally comfortable here?"

"I will remain here for the present, though I feel well again. I cannot be at ease, Amory, until thee permits me to say what is on my mind."

"Then say it, dear Aunt Eunice."

"Elizabeth—thee has been gentle with her? Poor child, I know she is suffering."

"I have said almost nothing to her."

"But thee was angry, Amory. I read thy face in that one glance."

"She did not know. I told her that I thought we had better not discuss the affair."

"Thee cannot set it aside that way, Amory."

"Not finally, but we can wait until we can talk with self-control."

Mrs. Russell was silent for a moment. "I fear it would have been wiser not to put her off. Elizabeth is impetuous and acts on impulse. I wish thee had been affectionate with her."

"She would not let me touch her, Aunt Eunice. It was her choice to have the room between us."

"I think thee could have disregarded that prohibition," said his aunt after another pause. "That would have been wiser, but how was thee to know? Perhaps it will be as well for you both to have an interval for reflection. I did not think, when I bade thee remember thy own faults while judging Elizabeth's, that thee would have such serious occasion. My heart goes out to her, for I know how

bitterly she will repent, and thy face does not indicate unqualified forgiveness."

"I can forgive Elizabeth much, but not for being the cause of thy seizure, Aunt Eunice."

"Amory, thee must hold thy love for Elizabeth above all other earthly affection."

"I have loved her but a short time. I cannot remember when I did not love thee."

"It is plain thee is wise in desiring time for reflection," said Mrs. Russell after a time. "Ah, Amory, thee was stubborn as a boy; thee can be so still."

Her nephew made no reply.

"Thee and Elizabeth alone must adjust things; no one can do it for you." Then she spoke again, quoting softly, more to herself than to Amory.

"'If there are any shades in God's deep love,
I do believe His deepest love goes out
To the tormented, irresponsible,
Gay, eager, burning, foolish heart of youth.'"

"Let me carry thee up-stairs, Aunt Eunice," said Amory, after a silence that seemed likely to last indefinitely. "Indeed, thee is not too heavy. Remember that I stand five foot ten and thee only reaches my shoulder."

"Thee may do so, dear. I did not think years ago, when I carried a sleepy little child up to bed.

that some day he would carry me over the same stairs. Thee is like thy uncle, Amory; most men of unusual physical strength are gentle to women and children."

"Shall I send Lydia to thee?" asked her nephew when he had placed her on the couch in her own room.

"Not just yet. Stay with me but a moment."

Amory knelt beside her as he had done on the day of his return.

"Don't worry about Elizabeth, Aunt Eunice. The moment she asks my forgiveness it is hers, but under the circumstances the least she can do is to express regret."

"Thee will know more about women some day. I would advise thee to forgive her before she asks. I know Elizabeth and I am fearful that she will do something desperate simply through reaction against this escapade."

"I should think this would last her for a time," observed Amory.

"Thee and Elizabeth will have mutually to bear and forbear like all young people. Give her my dear love, Amory. I wish she would come to me, for I would not have her feel she caused my illness."

"I am afraid there is no denying that she did, and I cannot let thee see her to-night. Thee must have no further agitation. When the right mo-

ment comes, and I don't think it will be this evening, I will be all thee wishes toward Elizabeth, except that I will *not* forgive her for indirectly making thee ill."

"Amory, thee promised not to judge."

"I won't except where some one hurts thee."

"I must make thee the subject of my prayer as well as Elizabeth. Thee would be more than human if thee did not feel tried with her, but we all need forgiveness so much that we must be quick to forgive others. I trust thee will rest to-night and that the morning may bring wisdom to both thee and Elizabeth. Thee has had much in the past twenty-four hours that has been hard to bear. Is thee going again to Hillcrest?"

"I shall drive up for a look at Uncle Henry, though he no longer needs me. I will go to bed early and I think I shall sleep, for I am tired."

"And thee has had no dinner. Go down at once, Amory. I had not realized I was keeping thee so long."

"Dinner!" said Amory. "I don't feel as though I wanted any, but I suppose I'll have to eat to please Lydia."

Lydia indeed awaited him anxiously in the lower hall, her face a picture of distress. Amory sent her to his aunt, saying he would ring for Bell if he needed attention. He took the opportunity as he

ate his lonely meal to look at the paper which had been the immediate cause of Mrs. Russell's attack.

The reporter who covered the incident was pleased to treat it facetiously, making much of the social prominence of the two involved, representing Elizabeth as ignoring her wrecked car in solicitude for her companion, and more than insinuating the existence of tender relations between them. Minute biographical details were furnished, together with an account of the proceedings before the magistrate, and the article was illustrated by photographs of both Clive and Elizabeth obtained at some charity festival the previous winter, and by a snapshot of the demolished window and damaged car.

It was enough to disgust a far less fastidious man than Amory, but strangely enough, for the first time since Elizabeth repulsed his attempt to take her in his arms, he felt sorry for her, appreciated that though it was a bitter pill to him, to her it must be nauseous. At the same moment came a realization that her manner, defiant in the extreme, had only been that of a child who has been so exceedingly naughty that it doesn't care what it does. Were he absolutely sure he could trust himself, Amory would have gone to Elizabeth at once and straightened the matter, but he was tired physically and troubled mentally. His lifelong training led

him to reflect before taking definite action, to seek the inner guidance, and he stuck to his opinion that it was better to give Elizabeth time to cool down.

Having finished his dinner he drove to the Averys'. Unlike Journey's End, Hillcrest was far from the water, commanding a wonderful sweep of sea and sky. Several newly-made millionaires coveted the site and were openly aggrieved that it seemed without price.

Amory left his car at a side door and entered the house without ringing. He went directly to the big front room where Mr. Avery lay in bed, white and weak from his ordeal of the previous night. He was alone, with gaze bent on the distant sea. On the other side of that blue expanse Putnam was sleeping on the Field of Honor. As Amory came in he looked at him with a smile that had in it a touch of wistful affection.

"How are you, Uncle Henry?" asked Amory, sitting down in a most unprofessional manner on the side of the bed and taking in both his own the hand outstretched to greet him.

"Very glad to see my special physician and very proud of you, Amory," was the quiet answer. "I gave you a tough job and you put it through."

"I'm mighty thankful I could help you," said Amory simply. "While Freeport is rather limited

as a field, it is worth while because of the service I can be to a few."

Henry Avery's eyes rested on him with a curious intentness. "I don't think you will ever regret your decision to practise in Freeport. And mind, Amory, when you send your bill, make it equivalent to the appreciation I feel."

Amory laughed. "It will be a distant day when you get a bill from me, Uncle Henry. There are two classes to whom I mean to give gratuitous service all my life; the extremely poor and the people I love. I'd as soon send a bill to Aunt Eunice as to you!"

Mr. Avery smiled. "I am willing to be indebted, Amory," he said quietly. "I knew last night that my physician was inspired by affection as well as skill. I wish Robert had lived to see you now."

After a pause he went on. "I hope you had an easy day after your strenuous time with me."

Amory was still sitting on the bed. He drew up one ankle and clasped it in a boyish manner. "I had a funny customer this afternoon," he said, "a Chinese. Uncle Henry, did you ever hear of a Tong?"

Mr. Avery considered. "I think I have heard the word, but I can't recall how nor where. In what connection was it used?"

Amory related the conversation which took place in his office.

"That was some sort of warning, Amory," said Mr. Avery in surprise.

"I am sure the old codger intended it as a kindness, but I'll be hanged if I understand what he was driving at. I suspect that though he really came to have his hand attended to, he knew about the queer doings at Journey's End."

"Tong," mused Mr. Avery. "Hold on, it is coming to me. Why, Amory, that is the Chinese name for a secret society or brotherhood. Years ago there was a murder here in Freeport, when the proprietor of the Chinese restaurant was killed, and it was due to his having in some way disobeyed the Tong to which he belonged. There was considerable discussion at the time—you would not remember because you were too young—but I recall that I then learned that there are numerous Tongs, some very powerful, existing in all classes of Chinese society. You didn't get any hint as to why one of these brotherhoods has become interested in Journey's End?"

"Only that the Tong wanted 'it,' whatever 'it' is, and he advised me to let them have 'it.' He distinctly said that they intended me no harm unless I got in the way."

“What is there in the east parlor likely to interest a Chinese?”

“The vases or possibly the ivory dragon on the mantel. But both have stood there all my life and why on earth should any Chinese society suddenly develop an interest in either?”

“That I can’t explain, but I do know that under a thin veneer of civilization they are a strange nation, full of superstition. Perhaps your first visitor, the one who disappeared so oddly, was interested in that dragon and has told others.”

“Well!” said Amory, suddenly recollecting his sister’s letters. “Caroline wrote me an insane lot of gibberish about an amulet and an evil spirit. What do you think of all that?” he inquired, having given a synopsis of those letters.

“Just as you do, that this is the twentieth century and we are far removed from evil sorcerers and familiar demons. But because we do not believe does not prevent others from being credulous, and as I said, the Chinese are extraordinarily superstitious, particularly in their belief in devils. It would not surprise me, putting together Caroline’s fantastic story and the warning from your patient to-day, to find that the dragon is of peculiar interest to some Tong, whose members wish to obtain possession of it.”

“If I were superstitious, I might think it had an

evil eye, and it is strange how I broke the glass and Lydia broke her finger and then I fell down-stairs and sprained my ankle —”

He stopped short. There was a fresh calamity to add to the list. In that room, in the presence of the dragon, he had held his fateful interview with Elizabeth and Mrs. Russell experienced her ill turn.

“The accidents are merely coincidences,” said Mr. Avery, “but it is an unfortunate thing to encounter superstition in others. Has your burglar alarm been put in?”

“Not yet. There is some unexpected delay; wire lacking, I understand.”

“And do you and Eunice place any great value on the dragon?”

“I don’t, and I am certain she has no affection for it.”

“Then I would get it out of Journey’s End; in fact, I should speed its going. Why not lend it to the Boston Art Museum? It is a fine piece of carving, and they would doubtless be glad to exhibit it.”

“That’s a bright idea, Uncle Henry. I believe I will write and ask if they would care to have it. Your theory sounds plausible, but I’d be interested to know more about the Tong and *why* they want the dragon, if that’s what they are after. Oh, here’s Aunt Ruth.”

“I did not know you came, Amory,” said Mrs.

Avery. "I just noticed your car and cook told me you had been here half an hour, so I hurried to see whether you and Henry were just having a visit or whether he needed you."

"We were only talking, and it is time I went. Aunt Eunice was not feeling very well."

"Not serious, I hope?" asked Mr. Avery.

"She is herself now and was resting when I left. Good-night, Uncle Henry."

"Good-night, my son. I feel the better for your visit. Ruth, I should like to see the evening paper."

"I will bring it presently," said Mrs. Avery in a voice which told Amory volumes. When they were in the hall she turned and embraced him.

"I am so sorry," she said gently, "so sorry for both you and Elizabeth, but more so for her. I am greatly drawn to Elizabeth and I know it will be a terrible thing to her to have hurt you, Amory, for this is hard for you. But, dear, we were all young once, and we make allowances for youthful gaiety and folly. In a short time this will be forgotten, and, indeed, I cannot see that there is anything to criticize except a little indiscretion. But I am troubled, Amory, because I fear that you were intending to take Elizabeth to the dance and that Henry's illness prevented your going."

"Nothing could induce me to go when I was needed here. Thank you, Aunt Ruth—you are a

brick to stand by Elizabeth. I do feel sore about it and I can't relieve my feelings by pitching into Templeton because the engagement wasn't public. Since I couldn't take her, Elizabeth had a perfect right to go with him if she wished, and the rest was merely bad luck. It is pretty sickening, but we shall pull through."

He kissed her and went directly home. As he drove into the garage he looked longingly at the house next door, but no one was on the porch and the windows were blank. Having put up his car, he went to his office, intending to take something for Mrs. Russell's use should she be wakeful. To his surprise there lay conspicuously on his desk a large square envelope. On its exterior in Elizabeth's penmanship was written: "Do not try to see me."

Amory opened the envelope and from it fell the sapphire ring he had given Elizabeth.

CHAPTER XXVI

IN WHICH ELIZABETH REPENTS VERY MUCH AT HER LEISURE

ACCORDING to his promise, Mr. Emerson stood by his daughter loyally, but he would have been well on the way toward sainthood had he not been annoyed by the newspaper publicity. True, he knew it imminent and was in a way prepared, but when the shock came, it was none the less disagreeable. Even the Boston papers took up the incident.

Coming out on the five o'clock train from town, Mr. Emerson was obliged to endure numerous comments, most of them humorous, upon his daughter's latest escapade, and he was too sore to realize that none were intentionally unkind. That a high-spirited athletic girl, impatient of restraint, should overstep the bounds of good taste, was to outsiders a mere matter of amusement, not the serious affair it seemed to those involved in the catastrophe. Mr. Emerson put on a good face and none of the men who chaffed him in the smoker during the run to Freeport suspected that he was particularly ruffled.

He was sufficiently out of temper on reaching the house to be relieved to hear that Elizabeth had gone to bed with a severe headache and would not come down again.

Her indisposition was no pretence; she was frankly sick and spent an uncomfortable night physically and a worse one mentally. When Mr. Emerson looked in upon her after breakfast the next morning his indignation vanished at sight of her face.

“Why, Bess, my little girl,” he said sympathetically.

Elizabeth took his hand and laid her hot cheek against it. She was literally unable to lift her head.

“I wouldn’t feel so badly,” he went on, smoothing her hair as he spoke. “It will all blow over in a few days.”

His daughter made no response but lay with eyes closed, her long lashes dark against a perfectly colorless face.

“After all, Bess, I’ll stand for the damages to your car. They’ll set you back a couple of hundred. Send the bill to me.”

Elizabeth kissed his hand and tried to smile. “No, Dad, I’ll pay them myself. But will you let me go away?”

“To Bar Harbor?” queried her father.

"Anywhere but there!" said Elizabeth with a shudder. "No, to the farm in the Berkshires."

"There's nobody there but the farmer and his wife. You wouldn't like it."

"I want to get away from Freeport."

"Well, we'll see. You aren't fit to go anywhere at present. I don't like your looks at all. Let me telephone Amory to come over."

Elizabeth sat up suddenly. "If you do, Dad, I'll—I'll go out and drown myself!" she announced desperately and, to the consternation of her father, fell back in a dead faint.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed, and, man-like, called for help. None of the maids happened to be within hearing. Mr. Emerson blundered into Elizabeth's bathroom and, after upsetting and demolishing a bottle of toilet water, discovered one of ammonia, which proved effective. Elizabeth pushed it from her with a gasp.

"Now, look here, Bess," said her father gravely, when she was herself again, "you are making a mountain out of a mole-hill. You haven't done anything bad enough to make yourself ill over. What's come to you? Why shouldn't Amory come and see you in my presence even though you are in bed? He's a doctor and I'm your father. What's happened?"

"I have broken my engagement," said Elizabeth faintly.

Her father was silent for a moment. "I suppose you know what you are doing," he said at length, "but I can tell you that Amory Russell is not a man with whom you can play fast and loose. He is as proud as Lucifer. You say you broke it. Did he accept the break without protest?"

"I don't know. I sent back my ring and told him not to try to see me."

"Oh, Lord!" groaned Mr. Emerson, "what fools young people can be! Bess, you certainly are one, and I suppose if I should hear the whole story, Amory is also."

"Dad," said Elizabeth, "I really cannot *stand* it if you disapprove of me any harder."

"Well, promise me one thing, Bess. Promise that you won't go out of town without my knowledge."

"Very well," said his daughter.

"And if you won't see Amory, will you let me call Dr. Utter?"

"No doctor can help me, Dad."

"One could," said her father sententiously. "Have it as you please, Bess, but if you care for my advice, it is not to wreck your life's happiness through a fit of recklessness. And if I don't find

you looking better at noon I shall send for Utter whether you like it or not."

Elizabeth made no reply and he left her to go to his office, after charging Sally to look after Miss Bess, which the kind-hearted Irish girl did to the best of her ability. Elizabeth's first request was that she should telephone next door and inquire for Mrs. Russell.

Sally came back with the news that Mrs. Russell was somewhat tired and was keeping her room but was otherwise as well as usual.

"Who answered?" asked Elizabeth, lying with closed eyes.

"The colored girl who waits on the doctor. Wouldn't you like a cup of hot coffee, Miss Bess?"

Sally instantly regretted the suggestion, for the very idea made Elizabeth violently sick. The room swam in waves before her. When she was comparatively comfortable again, she told Sally to draw the curtains and leave her. "I'll ring if I want anything," she said, and resigned herself to misery.

In a few minutes Sally came back. "Bell has brought a note from Journey's End," she said. "She's waiting for an answer."

With an effort Elizabeth forced herself to look at the envelope, and was both relieved and disap-

pointed to see that it was directed in Mrs. Russell's delicate penmanship. She tore it open.

"Dear Elizabeth, will thee come to me when it is convenient? My heart aches for thee and I think it will comfort us both to talk quietly together. Amory has gone to make some calls but he insists that I keep my room and we shall be uninterrupted. I am quite well again, and I love thee so much, my Elizabeth.

"EUNICE M. RUSSELL."

Crushing the note against her cheek, Elizabeth fought back the tears she could not shed before Sally.

"Please give me an envelope and some paper from my desk. And you needn't wait. I feel so sick that I can't write quickly. Tell Bell the answer will take ten or fifteen minutes. No, I can't manage ink,—give me a pencil."

Elizabeth propped herself on one elbow, found she could not endure even that, and after an interval of faintness, half-blinded by tears as she was, managed to scrawl a reply.

"I would come if I could, dear Aunt Eunice, but I am in bed with a sick headache. I am afraid I cannot get up to-day. Don't be sorry for me. I deserve to feel worse than I do. I am thankful you are better. My heart is broken to think how I have hurt you and Amory. I shall always love you.

"ELIZABETH."

Placing the note in its envelope, she sealed it and rang for Sally. Then she resigned herself to another period of physical misery after which she slept from sheer exhaustion.

In her big quiet chamber Mrs. Russell read the pathetic little letter, read it more than once, as she sat considering in her white chair by the window. When Amory came to her that morning, he looked as though he had slept poorly and he did not mention Elizabeth. Evidently the night had brought him no guidance, for he seemed in the same quietly obstinate mood. He did not tell his aunt of Elizabeth's final outbreak and she did not guess that matters were still worse with him, though the word "always" as used by Elizabeth in the last sentence of her note had a tone of finality which puzzled Mrs. Russell. She had hoped much from the interview she planned, trusting that Elizabeth might prove more pliable than Amory. Still there was a chance that he would be touched by the little note.

She showed it to him when he came again to her room at the conclusion of his office hour, his duties ended for the day unless for some unexpected call. He was very quiet and looked tired but was, as always, full of affectionate concern for her.

"Amory," she asked after her usual inquiries as to his patients, "do I remember correctly in

thinking that Admiral Fiske put an elevator into the house next door for the convenience of his invalid wife?"

"I believe there is one," agreed Amory, who was sitting on the foot of her couch.

"Then thee will not object if I go to see Elizabeth, since I shall not have to climb the stairs. I wrote her a note this morning asking her to come to me, but she is ill. There is her reply."

Amory read the note in silence, and his aunt's loving eyes saw no change in his expression.

"Elizabeth is suffering," she said, after giving him ample opportunity to speak if he were so inclined. "I should like to do what is possible for her comfort since she is alone with servants. At my request Lydia telephoned half an hour ago and was told that she was yet unable to lift her head from her pillow. Does thee still feel that she is unrepentant for the pain she gave thee?"

"No, Aunt Eunice," said her nephew very quietly.

"Then will thee not let me give her some message, or write one for me to take, if thee prefers."

Amory was still silent and his apparent reluctance really shocked Mrs. Russell.

"Amory," she said with as much severity as she could bring herself to use toward him, "I am astonished at thy attitude. Thy continued resent-

ment seems to me both cruel and unjust. Elizabeth admits that she is heart-broken,—what more does thee await?"

"Thee misunderstands me," said Amory, speaking with an effort. "I am powerless to do anything at present. Elizabeth sent back the ring I gave her and commanded me to make no effort to see her."

Mrs. Russell sighed. "My poor Elizabeth!" she said after a long pause. "Surely, Amory, thee will not take that prohibition seriously. Does thee not understand that Elizabeth in her great penitence is but punishing herself?"

"And me at the same time. Aunt Eunice, I will not have thee troubled. I have forgiven Elizabeth,—yes, even for making thee ill. She has hurt me, but she warned me that she was liable to do so. I shall not accept her dismissal as final until she confirms it in spoken words, and I cannot bring myself to think she will say them, but I don't know what to do next. I went to her house last night after finding her message and the ring, but she was already in bed and refused to come down."

"Oh, I am glad thee did that, Amory. I only hope she will not fly off to Bar Harbor or to some other place before granting thee a chance to see her. For as soon as you can see each other, she will relent. I understand now why she thus ended this

letter. But, dear,—she is ill,—perhaps she would see thee as a physician."

"No hope of that. I met Mr. Emerson who said he suggested my coming and that she would not hear of it. From his report, she is in a very nervous condition. I can't do anything at all until she is more composed. I couldn't visit her merely in my professional capacity, Aunt Eunice; I feel too intensely to trust myself to remain impersonal."

"If she would only let thee come, she would not wish thee to remain impersonal," sighed his aunt. "I owe thee an apology for my reproof just now. Thee did not deserve it; thee has done all thee could. But what thee says makes me doubt whether it is wise to go to her as I intended. Perhaps I would better wait until to-morrow."

"Elizabeth seems in such a state that thy going may not better matters, and I can't have thee agitated, Aunt Eunice. Doesn't thee think thee'd better write another note, saying thee will come to-morrow if she is feeling well enough?"

"Perhaps that is wise. I can keep myself calm, but Elizabeth is another matter and the poor child has had all she can bear. Hand me my portfolio, Amory, and I will send by Bell."

Her nephew brought her the leather case and remained silent while she wrote. "Perhaps thee would care to add a postscript," she suggested,

handing him the open sheet. "Read it and see if thee wishes to do so."

"MY VERY DEAR ELIZABETH:

"I am so sorry thee is feeling ill. I thought of visiting thee, but decided that I would be more welcome to-morrow. If thee is unable to come to me in the morning, send a message and I will come there. I hope thee may have a peaceful night. Remember that I am loving thee every moment.

"E. M. R."

Amory took the pen and in very small letters added, "So am I. A."

"Thee had better seal the envelope," said Mrs. Russell as he folded the sheet. "While I believe Bell to be honest, she is interested in the affairs of the house, and that letter is not one to be shared. And when thee has sent Bell with the note, will thee not go down to the *Whitewing* for an hour or so? There is a fair breeze and thee would find thyself rested when thee returns."

She made the suggestion without much expectation that he would go, but the harbor was filled with tossing white-caps and Amory had worked off many a disjointed mood in his boat. Presently Lydia reported that he had gone down through the garden dressed in a bathing-suit, and at dinner, he certainly appeared to be in a more peaceful state of mind.

The second note was brought to Elizabeth just as she was beginning to feel better. Her head no longer throbbed and the fearful nausea was gone, leaving her weak and helpless but on the road to recovery. At first, she did not see Amory's little postscript, but when she did, it brought a burst of tears and she went to sleep for the night with the note clasped in one hand.

CHAPTER XXVII

IN WHICH ELIZABETH CHANGES HER MIND

MRS. RUSSELL was spared the effort of making her proposed visit, for the next morning Elizabeth telephoned that she was feeling much better and would come to Journey's End about ten, an hour when she knew Amory would not be at home. She waited until she saw the coupé with its little green cross leave the garage next door and go slowly down the street.

It was a pale and rather shaky Elizabeth who appeared to Mrs. Russell in the west sitting-room where a pleasant breeze came through from the sea. She showed plainly that she was suffering, yet she was rather unnaturally calm and exhibited only slight emotion when drawn into the loving embrace that awaited her.

"Elizabeth, my dear child," said Mrs. Russell affectionately, and then she only petted her silently until she felt the tense young figure begin to relax.

"I have come to say good-bye, Aunt Eunice. I am going away for a while. Dad has a farm out in

the Berkshires and I have induced him to think he'd like to motor there and see how things are going. There's a nice little farmhouse and I am planning to stay for a month or two."

Mrs. Russell made no comment but something in her manner compelled Elizabeth to add a few more words. "I cannot stay in Freeport, Aunt Eunice."

"It has always seemed to me that when one makes a mistake, it is a good plan to face it and live it down on the spot. And is thee not exaggerating the importance of this one?"

"It is pretty big," said the girl despondently. Then she turned and put her arms about Mrs. Russell's neck. "I am ashamed to stay," she admitted. "I have not looked you in the face. I cannot."

"Dear, does thee think I judge thee harshly?"

"I don't believe you judge me at all. I can't bear *myself*."

"Thee will take thyself to Berkshire and find it no more bearable there. Thee will have the same company only under a changed sky."

There was a long pause and then Elizabeth asked a question. "What would you advise me to do, Aunt Eunice?"

"If I tell thee, will thee do it? It is the only possible way to set right again the trouble and confusion into which thy impetuosity has drawn people who love thee."

"What is it? I can't promise without knowing."

"Nothing very difficult. I would tell thee to go to the stone seat in the lilac walk and wait there till I send Amory to thee. That is thy direct path to peace."

Elizabeth shivered. "You don't understand, Aunt Eunice. I can't marry Amory. I can't do it. In the beginning I thought perhaps I could. I meant to try so hard to be worthy of his love, and just see what I did—the first time things went cross-grained with me. I'm not fit to be a doctor's wife. I understood perfectly in the very beginning that Amory's time and attention belong to the people who need him, and my love wasn't equal to the first test that came. I'm not the girl he ought to marry—I told him so. He ought to have somebody who can keep calm and who doesn't fly off the handle the way I do, somebody like Phebe Ames. He would have a peaceful life if he married her; it'll never be peaceful with me."

"Amory doesn't happen to love Phebe. That is one of the mysteries of life how and why, choice comes. I have never before known Amory to pay any girl more than passing attention till he met thee. His love is not the thing of a moment. Thee interested him from the first, and indeed, Elizabeth, I think thee is taking considerable upon thyself to decide the matter without giving him a chance to

speak. Thee is honest by nature; does it seem to thee really fair to expect him to accept thy dismissal without an interview? He has a right to an explanation. Thee must admit that."

"I don't dare see him, Aunt Eunice."

"And why not?"

"Because I love him so much," admitted Elizabeth just above a whisper.

"Oh, what a silly little girl! Thee loves Amory and he loves thee, and yet for a foolish scruple, thee would bring unhappiness upon both. Can thee not trust that love to help thee over whatever difficulties may come? Really, Elizabeth, I wish that thee was ten years old. I would put thee to bed and keep thee there till thee came to thy senses."

Elizabeth laughed hysterically.

"Dear," Mrs. Russell went on, "I respect thee for wishing to be more worthy of love. Did thee ever hear the story of the missionary who toiled in a hard and discouraging field? Finally he wrote to his bishop and asked to be relieved, saying that God needed a better man than he for that especial work. And the bishop wrote back saying: 'It is true that a better man is needed for that field, but God wants you to be that better man.' Read thy own lesson, Elizabeth. Out of all the world, Amory has chosen thee; can thee not rise to the occasion?"

"I don't see how he can keep on caring for me,"

sobbed Elizabeth. "Aunt Eunice, it is truly because I love him that I want him to feel free, now I have got myself into such a mess and made myself so talked about, and made you ill."

"And thyself as well. Thee has relieved thy own conscience by returning the ring. I would not give a straw for Amory's love if it were capable of being seriously affected by this escapade, but it is not. He did not lay anything up against thee except my unfortunate illness, and he has forgiven that now.

"Be absolutely honest, Elizabeth. Is thee not punishing thyself because thee feels the need of discipline? And does thee not see that thee is giving equal pain to Amory? Thee has carried thy self-discipline quite far enough; thee is being selfish. And love and selfishness cannot inhabit the same heart. Has thee ever heard this little poem?

" 'Self is the only prison that can bind the soul,
Love is the only angel that can bid the gates unroll.
And when he comes to call thee, arise and follow
fast;
The way may lie through darkness, but it leads to
light at last.' "

Mrs. Russell did not understand Elizabeth's sudden movement as she spoke the third line of the stanza, but it fell on the girl's ear with a profound shock, bringing back to her the occasion when she

first heard it, and all that had subsequently followed.

Then came complete silence, during which Elizabeth sat with black head bowed on Mrs. Russell's shoulder. The clock in the hall struck twice and a passing car gave a toot which Mrs. Russell recognized, though the girl did not.

"Has thee had time for meditation, dear?" she asked. "Will thee do as I advise thee?"

Elizabeth sat up straight and for the first time looked into the face beside her.

"Oh, why didn't somebody teach me to be good before?" she asked with a touching quiver of her lips. "Yes, Aunt Eunice, I will see Amory, but I don't believe he still wants me."

"It is sunny in the garden and I forgot that thy head may be sensitive. I will send Amory to thee here. I think that he just drove in. If he has an engagement I will come and tell thee."

Mrs. Russell left the room and Elizabeth buried her face in the sofa pillows. Perhaps ten minutes passed before the door opened abruptly.

This time Elizabeth did not repulse Amory. She wept but they were tears of healing and when every cloud of misunderstanding had been dispersed with loving words and penitent apologies on both sides, she let him put the sapphire ring again upon her finger. Only then did she utter a word of protest.

"It's a risk," she forced herself to say. "I can't be sure that I won't hurt you again, Amory."

"We shall not disagree again," he said, kissing the finger where shone the blue stone. "I have learned my lesson. But, dear, there is one thing that I want done. I want our engagement announced immediately."

"Now?" exclaimed the petrified Elizabeth. "Now, when everybody is talking about me?"

"Yes," said Amory quietly. "I want to give you the protection of my name. Nothing will stop the unkind comments so effectively."

Elizabeth again burst into tears. "I didn't suppose anybody could be so generous, Amory. You are a revelation to me."

"I love you, Elizabeth, and where love is there can be no question of generosity. It is only what is your right,—to have me stand by you in a hard place. I will speak to your father at once and I hope your mother will consent. It could be done without any special fuss, just by mentioning it to a few friends."

Elizabeth was silent, too moved by his tender consideration easily to express her feelings, but her silence was not misunderstood. Amory had already taken a long step toward comprehending Elizabeth's rather complex nature.

"Your head still aches, doesn't it?" he asked presently. "Let me see if I can help it."

"What are you doing to me?" she asked in surprise a few minutes later. "The pain seems to be going under your touch."

"Something that I can usually do for people I love, sometimes for others. Uncle Robert used to suffer from neuralgic headaches and I could often relieve him. It is simply a certain amount of magnetic power I possess which at times reacts upon others. No, I don't think it an uncommon power; many physicians have it to a greater or lesser extent. I have sometimes found it useful, especially with children, and it is with them that I hope to work eventually. One reason that I seemed cold to you the other day, Elizabeth, was because I had been giving somewhat of myself to Uncle Henry in this way, and I was tired."

"People would never disagree if they only fully understood," said Elizabeth penitently.

"To know all is to forgive all," quoted Amory. "How's your head?"

"It has stopped aching entirely."

"And you are not going to the Berkshires this afternoon?"

"No. Poor Dad! I have kept him on pins and needles for two days. He told me I was a fool, which was a rude and unfatherly thing

to say, but I will go home and tell him he was right."

Amory laughed. "Will you come into the east parlor and let me hug you on the spot where we disagreed?"

Elizabeth assented. Somewhat to their surprise they found Mrs. Russell there before them. It was seldom that she sat in that room and they supposed her on the terrace.

"Thy naughty children have decided to be good," said Amory as they came to her.

"And quite time," said Mrs. Russell, smiling as they took her between them. "Elizabeth, I think thee should at least lie down if thee is unwilling to retire to bed. Thee looks pale."

"I am going to bed for the rest of the day," said Elizabeth quietly. "I promised Amory I would. This evening we are going sailing if I feel like it."

"Be quite sure thee does feel like it. After a day's sickness, I should prefer a drive."

"It is to be that, if she does not feel like the *Whitewing*," said Amory. "What has thee done with the dragon, Aunt Eunice?"

"That is what I was about to ask of thee," replied his aunt, following his glance to the mantel where the green velvet mat lay in place, but unoccupied by the lordly carved monster. "Did thee not remove it?"

"Not I. Perhaps Lydia has put it away from the dust in some case."

"She says not and I do not believe Lydia would touch it. She foolishly attributes her injured hand to its unwillingness to be removed."

"That's interesting!" said Amory. His glance instantly traveled to the windows. Then he gave an exclamation and crossed the room.

"That *was* what they were after and they have put the job over! See, here is a piece cut out of this pane above the catch. Somebody has entered and taken the dragon."

"If it ends the attempted burglaries, I, for one, am not sorry to see the dragon go," admitted Mrs. Russell, when they had convinced themselves that at some time during the past night, a window had been forced and the house entered. "But those vases are valuable and they also are Chinese—why did the thief not take them?"

Amory gave the explanation so far as he knew it, by putting together the warning from his Chinese patient, Caroline's letters and Uncle Henry's information concerning secret brotherhoods. That nothing was missing except the dragon seemed to prove the theory.

"And a good riddance, too!" he ended. "I shouldn't wonder if the unheard-of delay about the burglar-alarm was a part of the scheme, for as I

drove home just now the electrician stopped me to say he would start work to-morrow."

"I wonder whether we shall ever know anything more about it," Elizabeth said thoughtfully, when Mrs. Russell had gone to telephone for a glazier to repair the window.

"Nothing is impossible," said Amory. "The dragon may yet come home to roost."

"I hope he won't. I never liked him; he made me feel creepy and I think he made me hateful the other day. I said so much I never meant to say. Amory, you must acknowledge now that there *was* something in what that palmist told us. We did get mixed up in a mess—not physical danger, as I mistakenly took it to mean—but my recklessness and selfishness precipitated a storm that came near wrecking our happiness."

"I still think the palmist knew nothing about it," said Amory in amusement, holding her in the embrace she had promised. "But if you want to believe it, go ahead, only admit that we have safely weathered the storm. But after this, Queen Bess, we will keep away from booths with palmists or fortune-tellers of any kind, yes—and from Chinese dragons that give you the creeps."

CHAPTER XXVIII

IN WHICH MRS. EMERSON COMES HOME AND JOHN HOWLAND VISITS HIS SAFE

AFTER they discovered that the dragon was gone, Elizabeth went home and to a rest that truly deserved the name. Her cheek against the sapphire ring, she drifted into peaceful oblivion.

The afternoon was well advanced before she roused to consciousness that she was no longer alone.

“Goodness, Mother!” she exclaimed. “Did you come home? What for?”

“I shouldn’t think you would need to ask, Elizabeth,” replied her mother, offering a cold caress. “Tuesday’s papers are a sufficient reason, not to mention the letters I have received. I came home to see what can be done.”

“It’s all over but the shouting,” said Elizabeth lightly, lying down again with her face turned away. “I acted like an idiot and had to take the consequences.”

“You speak as though the consequences were

comprised merely in what happened to the car. Do you realize how people are talking about you?"

"Let 'em," replied Elizabeth disrespectfully.

"Gossip is not the trivial thing you consider it, and this time, Elizabeth, you have really overstepped all bounds."

"Except for the accident I did nothing I haven't done before."

"That may be. This time you have incurred most unfortunate publicity."

"It's horrid, I know, but is it the publicity you object to, or what I did?"

"Elizabeth, you really are impossible. One led to the other."

"But you wouldn't care *what* I did so long as nobody knew? I just want to get your point of view, Mother. Is it the being talked about that is the indiscretion?"

"We will not discuss it," said Mrs. Emerson in her stateliest manner. "The important thing is what is to be done next. I am going to send for Amory and tell him that the engagement must be announced. That is the quickest way to stop the gossip."

"If that's all, you needn't bother him, Mother," observed Elizabeth nonchalantly. "He has already told me that he wished it made public immediately and he's spoken to Dad."

Between her fingers, Elizabeth watched Mrs. Emerson's face and was pleased with the expression of blank surprise which crossed it at this statement. Another she liked less succeeded it and the whole situation flashed upon Elizabeth. Her mother expected Amory to be sufficiently annoyed over her escapade to contemplate breaking the engagement and in order to prevent this catastrophe, she had abandoned her two older daughters and rushed to the rescue.

A gleam of anger lighted Elizabeth's eyes, followed by a sudden conviction that it was impossible for Mrs. Emerson ever to understand Amory's nature, and that all discussion was useless. Why should she be angry with her mother for drawing conclusions after her own mind?—had not she, Elizabeth, also been small-minded enough to be overcome with surprise at his generosity? But a comforting thought followed,—she had loved Amory enough to try to spare him the embarrassment arising from her misdoing, and he had not wished to be spared.

The flash of anger died down and Elizabeth left unuttered the hasty words that had been on her lips. She lay watching her mother's face and when Mrs. Emerson again spoke, her tone showed relief.

“That Amory feels so simplifies matters very much,” she said cheerfully. “Originally I planned

a luncheon, but that would mean more delay than is now desirable."

"I don't want a luncheon. Tell Mrs. Jardine; she'll notify the entire town."

"Alice Jardine will be surprised," said Mrs. Emerson in satisfaction. "I shall be lunching with Mrs. Beeson to-morrow and I will drop a word. And you had better write notes to some of the girls."

Elizabeth started to refuse impatiently, thought better of it and remained silent.

"And of course you may wear your ring publicly. By the way, I have not looked at it. Let me see it."

Drawing her hand from under her cheek, Elizabeth reluctantly held it out. Her mother gave an exclamation.

"I was disappointed when you wrote that it was not a diamond, but this is a wonderful stone, Bess. And its setting is most unusual. It must have cost several hundred dollars."

"I haven't an idea of its value and I don't *want* to know," snapped Elizabeth, snatching back her hand. "I would love it if it wasn't worth ten cents."

"You can rest assured that no girl of your set is likely to have a more valuable engagement ring. Some time when we are in Boston —"

"Once and for all, Mother, I will *not* show my ring to any jeweler. Please understand that."

"Elizabeth, do keep your temper. There's no reason for you to be so touchy. I only want you to realize that such a sapphire is no small gift and yet it is in perfect taste."

"I know it!" sighed Elizabeth. "Oh, well, Mother, I'll try to be decent. Amory is going to take me out this evening if I feel like it. You can see him then but you won't need to try to manage him; his own fine instincts tell him what is the most considerate thing for me."

"I am indeed relieved to find you both so reasonable. And how about your future plans? I suppose you will live at Journey's End, for Amory won't wish to leave his aunt. But I should have it distinctly understood in the beginning, Elizabeth, that I was to be mistress in my own house, and I should dismiss old Lydia. The other servants will probably be easier to get on with."

"You overlook one thing, Mother," said Elizabeth after a pause in which she was struggling to control herself. "Journey's End will indeed be under the charge of its mistress—and she happens to be Mrs. Robert Russell. I don't think Mrs. Amory will take her place."

"You will have difficulties unless things are distinctly understood before you go there."

"Journey's End belongs to Aunt Eunice. She has told me that she is delighted to have Amory bring me home. What financial arrangements Amory will make, I don't know and I don't care. I only know that I shall never do or say one thing to make Aunt Eunice feel she must step aside. And as for old Lydia, I can assure you that when she is past helpfulness, the pleasantest room in Journey's End will be placed at her disposal and a nurse engaged to wait on her as long as she lives. That's the way the Russells do things, Mother."

"Well, we won't discuss the matter to-day. Are you sick or just resting?"

"I was sick yesterday. I am going to get up presently. You look tired yourself, Mother; why don't you lie down? There's nothing to see to, for I ordered dinner and you'll have nearly two hours before Dad comes home. How are the girls?"

Mrs. Emerson told her while gradually leaving the room. When she was really gone, her daughter drew a long sigh of relief, and then resolved that if it were a possible thing, she would not permit herself to be ruffled by anything her mother might do, and that she would take quietly and cheerfully the stir inevitably raised by the making public of her engagement.

It proved considerable, coming so soon upon the notoriety Elizabeth had recently attained, and yet

the wisdom of the announcement was at once apparent. After the first incredulous exclamations, her little world uttered others of surprised congratulation, of more respectful comment upon her escapade, veering to the opinion that there was more in the affair than had yet been made public, and finally placing the blame where much of it really belonged, at Clive Templeton's door. Elizabeth was truly amazed at the shelter and protection afforded by Amory's name.

Amory himself took his place as her acknowledged suitor with a grave dignity, their first public appearance being at the Saturday night dance at the Yacht Club, properly chaperoned by Elizabeth's mother. To encounter that assemblage cost Elizabeth some embarrassment, but she came with a quiet manner that carried her over the first awkward moments in the dressing-room where she was the recipient of many congratulations, sincere or half-envious. She had been fearful of encountering Clive, but that young gentleman, perceiving public opinion turning against him, had taken himself out of town.

Amory's manner was perfect and the evening was not half over before Elizabeth came to complete realization that she would not be haunted by her past misdeeds. Her mother appreciated this fact even earlier, and heard with solid satisfaction the

respectful congratulations. She gave no sign that she thought what some frankly said, that Elizabeth was a fortunate girl. To Mrs. Jardine she was very gracious, expatiated upon its being a love-match pure and simple, originating in the many tastes they shared in common, and acknowledged the probability of an early wedding. Mrs. Jardine had hard work to conceal her mortification but managed on the whole to keep a serene face, though inwardly boiling with wrath over Mrs. Emerson's complacency.

Doris, however, one of a bevy of young girls crowding around to admire Elizabeth's ring, took the opportunity to give her hand a sudden squeeze. "Everybody is congratulating *you*, Bess," she whispered. "I'm going to congratulate Dr. Russell. The luck isn't all yours."

Elizabeth caught her in an impulsive embrace. "That's the sweetest thing anybody has said to-night," she answered, and Doris, looking into her eyes, found there a look no one else had seen.

She was as good as her word and did speak to Amory, who had asked her for a dance. The sight of them, talking earnestly as they danced, caused Mrs. Jardine an extra pang. Amory was absorbed in what Doris was saying, but how could she know that they talked of Elizabeth?

The echoes of that engagement reached other

circles of Freeport. Elizabeth and her mother were presently receiving calls from the very exclusive one that represented old Freeport, the long-established wealthy families, some of them Friends, who had never mingled much with more recent comers. These calls completed Mrs. Emerson's deep satisfaction. There could be no possible doubt that her daughter's engagement to Dr. Russell had opened to her every desirable door in town.

Nor did the interest in the affair end with its purely social aspects. It was spoken of in numerous places of business, and one afternoon when Amory and Elizabeth were out in the *Whitewing*, a conversation took place in a certain down-town office, which would have been of intense interest to both. The office was that of John Howland, and the talk took place between him and Henry Avery, who had called on a matter of business. Having arranged it, something caused the lawyer to refer to Mrs. Russell, and from her they passed to Amory.

"What do you think of his engagement?" John Howland asked. "Do you know the girl?"

"Slightly. Amory has brought her to the house. Yes, on the whole, I feel attracted to Elizabeth."

"My Jack seems to like her, but my wife thinks she has been rather fast. Can Amory stand that?"

"Elizabeth struck me as a high-spirited girl,"

observed Mr. Avery thoughtfully, "but as a girl who was really pure and sweet, though she may be guilty of some youthful indiscretions. Eunice seems fond of her and Eunice is a good judge. I think Amory is very much in love with Elizabeth and she with him. Amory himself is so fine, that his love will lift hers to its own level. They enjoy a good deal in common, and that is a good basis for a happy marriage. I should say that Elizabeth was the pick of the Emerson girls, that is for character and possibilities of development. I should feel very badly if Amory made an unfortunate choice, but I believe we can trust him to know what he is doing. He is not a boy who is governed by impulse."

"No," said John Howland, "not like poor Charles. I should like to know how much of Amory's poise is natural and how much is due to his home training. I wish Robert had lived to see how well he is turning out."

The eyes of the two met and there was in their gaze the consciousness of some knowledge in common.

"Did you hear," John Howland went on, "about George McKim's girl? She was taken seriously ill the other night and they called Utter. He was puzzled, for the symptoms were extremely peculiar and blind. He worked over her half the night and she

grew steadily worse. Finally McKim begged him to call in another doctor and he chose Amory. Amory diagnosed it as appendicitis and advised an immediate operation. I don't understand the technicalities of the case, but Utter maintained it couldn't be that from the locality of the pain. Amory stuck to his opinion and Utter finally agreed that though the symptoms were peculiar no other theory covered them. So he withdrew his objection and asked Amory to operate. They waited only for the dawn and, as soon as it was light enough, Utter administered the ether and Amory did the job. His diagnosis was perfectly correct; it was an obscure and most unusual case of appendicitis, and Gertrude could not have lived two hours longer without the operation. Utter admits it generously and gives Amory full credit. McKim told me all about it with the tears rolling down his face."

"Amory did a rather wonderful thing for Alexander Hudson's baby grandson," said Mr. Avery thoughtfully, "some operation that is very difficult on such a tiny child. And he was called to Boston yesterday in consultation by some man who had known him in France. I think it remarkable that he should so soon inspire such confidence in his abilities."

Again his eyes met those of the lawyer. "John,"

he asked, after a glance at the door leading into the outer office, "how long is it going to be before that trust in Robert's will reaches maturity?"

"Less than two years, I think," Mr. Howland replied in a low tone. "Those securities Robert set aside have increased tremendously in value. The trust will cumulate considerably before the time Robert anticipated."

"It looks as though other things would be ready for it. Let me take a look at those conditions, John."

Mr. Howland locked the office door and went to the safe in the corner.

"Has Amory ever asked you any questions?" inquired Mr. Avery, watching him open it and unlock an inner compartment.

"Only one, whether his aunt knew the purpose of the trust. I told him she did not and he has never spoken of it again. I don't think it occurs to him that it can concern him. Here are the conditions."

He took out a single sheet of paper which the two read in silence.

"Well-l," said Henry Avery thoughtfully. "Even in these days of high prices, that ought to build and equip as large a hospital as Freeport will ever need. And the endowment—how much do you calculate that will bring in yearly?"

"It should be around thirty thousand, more rather than less."

"With that plant and backing, Amory ought to be able to do about everything he is likely to want to do."

Taking the paper, Mr. Avery read aloud: "'The same board of trustees to be a self-perpetuating body, serving without pay; the physician in charge of this hospital to be my nephew, Amory Russell, if in the opinion of the said board of trustees he has shown himself to be possessed of the necessary professional requirements, and as a man has proved himself responsible and trustworthy. If for any reason he does not wish to accept the position or is considered by the board unfitted for its great responsibilities, they shall have full power to choose a physician qualified to discharge its duties. But it is my earnest hope that my nephew may prove himself equal to this opportunity. I hope that he may choose Freeport as the place to begin his practice and by the time this trust matures, may have established himself in the confidence and respect of the town.'"

Henry Avery laid down the paper and took off his glasses. "I think," he said thoughtfully, "the trustees,—you and Andrew and I—will be of one mind. Amory has certainly come up to what Robert hoped and expected of him. And on the day

that trust is made public, Amory will have the surprise of his life."

"His staying in Freeport is no part of the conditions, merely a wish on Robert's part, but still I am glad that it worked out that way. I went so far as to tell Amory when, at Mrs. Russell's request, he asked my advice, that I thought he would not lose by doing what seemed obviously his duty to his aunt."

"And I," observed Henry Avery, smiling, "told him that I thought he would not regret his decision to stay in Freeport.

"Of course," he went on, "Ruth knows nothing of this trust and I cannot say anything to her until it matures. From Robert's directions, the hospital is to be a general one, but I have noticed that Amory is especially interested in children and seems to have success in dealing with them. I have made up my mind when the time comes, to make an additional endowment, and by the way, John, I want this put into a codicil to my will. Get it into shape for me later. This endowment is to be for a children's ward, or perhaps a separate building if it seems best, but to be in Amory's charge, and it is to be known as the Putnam Avery Memorial."

There fell a silence during which John Howland looked out of the office window. After a time Henry Avery spoke again.

"Unless," he said deliberately, "you and Emily would like to go shares with Ruth and me, and make it in memory of both Tom and Putnam. Somehow, I think that would please Amory even more."

CHAPTER XXIX

IN WHICH AMORY AND ELIZABETH GO OUT IN THE *WHITEWING* AND THE DRAGON VANISHES FOREVER

WHILE this momentous conversation was going on, Amory and Elizabeth, entirely unaware that they were the subject of any discussion, were in the *Whitewing*, scudding before a fair wind toward the open sea.

Elizabeth did not know their destination and Amory would not tell her. He was in a mischievous boyish mood which she had learned to recognize as liable to follow upon a period of professional strain. As a sort of safety valve he would tease her gently or break out in some prankish performance which amused her. To-day a fairly large steamer lay temporarily disabled in the tide-way and Amory, seizing his megaphone, quite gravely offered her a tow. The passengers, crowding to the rail to watch the *Whitewing* pass, roared with laughter.

Elizabeth laughed too. She held the tiller and Amory, in his rubber-soled shoes, stood on the gunwale, clutching a stay. He looked a mere boy with his hair on end in the wind and the captain doubt-

less took him for one as he calmly advised him "not to get fresh, sonny!"

"Don't you feel properly set down?" asked Elizabeth as they left the steamer behind and Amory came aft to her, his eyes yet full of fun.

"Frightfully squelched. Don't you notice my dejection?"

"I haven't so far. I should think you'd feel awfully pleased and proud that you were called yesterday to that hospital in Boston. My head is swelled over it if yours isn't."

"Of course I was pleased that Dr. Halliwell wanted me but I learned a lot, too, and that is what counts most. Afterwards I had an adventure. Because of my adventure we are out here in the harbor this afternoon."

Elizabeth looked at him wonderingly. "So that was why you won't tell me where we are going. I thought it was probably a picnic."

"No picnic beyond two doughnuts." Amory drew a paper bag from his pocket. "Dear me!" he exclaimed anxiously, "they are not at all the same size."

Producing a folding-rule, he devoted his full attention to those doughnuts with an absurd concern that convulsed Elizabeth.

"You've measured them in every possible direction. That one is bigger; give it to me."

"I won't," said Amory. "I'm bigger than you are."

For two minutes they scrapped like children and finished by knocking one doughnut overboard. Peace restored, they scrupulously divided the remaining one, Amory even counting out the crumbs by twos.

"I think you might have sneaked an apple," he said reproachfully. "I was in a tearing hurry."

"It isn't good for little boys to eat between meals. Tell me now about your adventure."

"It was some adventure," said Amory, shutting his pocket-knife and rumpling his hair still more. "Luff a bit, Elizabeth. Well, when Halliwell asked me to come to town yesterday, my car was on the blink, so I took the train. After leaving the hospital, I started to walk to the station, through those crooked streets, you know, around the region of the old court-house."

"Yes, I know. I'm always getting lost there."

"Some unset stones in a jeweler's window caught my eye and I stopped to look at them. I never wore a ring in my life and never shall, except the plain one you will put on my finger, Queen Bess, but I like stones. You won't mind wearing them for me, will you?"

Elizabeth's answer having been placed on record, Amory continued his story.

"I saw an uncommon opal and went in to look at it. The place was a sort of antique shop; there were old silver things and curiosities, some of them valuable. I asked for the opal and while the man was getting it from the window, I looked about. What do you suppose I saw?"

"Give it up!" said Elizabeth promptly. "I hate to guess things, Amory."

"Well," said Amory dramatically, "on a stand behind the counter, large as life and twice as natural, sat that Chinese dragon which lately graced the east parlor at Journey's End!"

Elizabeth was quite as much surprised as Amory anticipated. In her excitement, she very nearly fouled a fishing-boat.

Having straightened out the *Whitewing* and given the fisherman a cheerful apology, Amory went on.

"There it sat grinning devilishly, and, to my amazement, about its neck was the jade and pearl pendant which always hung there until Aunt Eunice gave it to Caroline!"

"I asked to see it and the proprietor handed it over. It wasn't possible for me to be mistaken,—that was the identical dragon that I remember as long as I remember anything at Journey's End. I looked it over minutely and looked at the man in charge. He was elderly and evidently a gentleman,

so finally I told him that I was interested in that dragon; that I had seen it before, and that I should very much like to know how it came into his possession.

"He looked me over with equal keenness and concluded that there was no reason to suspect me of sinister designs, so he said frankly that there had been some kind of row and a stabbing affray in the Chinese quarter, the police were called in, and as a result this dragon found itself in court where nobody claimed it. After an interval he bought it.

"I asked if anybody had been in to look at it since it came into his possession. He said it had not been displayed in the window, but that very morning a Chinese who chanced to enter the shop on another errand had examined it carefully and seemed rather excited about it. I asked if this customer wished to buy it and he said he made no offer and did not even ask its price. Then he openly asked me why I was interested.

"After considering a moment, I told him the whole story. I could not see that it would do any harm. He was greatly interested and remarked that it was an odd affair. I told him all I knew,—what Uncle Henry told me—and there having already been blood shed over it does go far toward proving his theory. While we were talking an-

other man came into the shop and the proprietor fairly fell upon his neck and dragged him to me, introducing him as Professor Nelson, the orientalist, you know.

"Well, Queen Bess, we three had a heart-to-heart talk and I forgot all about my train to Freeport. I repeated my story for Professor Nelson's benefit and in return he told me why the dragon was desired by the Chinese.

"According to Professor Nelson, the dragon is, or rather it represents, the tutelary spirit of a powerful and old secret society, originating in China, but with far-reaching branches in other countries. He obtained this information from the characters on the amulet, but he was unable to explain why the dragon should have stood for years on the mantel at Journey's End and have remained dormant, so to speak, until Aunt Eunice gave the jade pendant to Carol. He could only suggest that the Russell who originally brought it from China did so without being traced by any members of the Tong, but that Yin Luk must be one of them, and from seeing the amulet, knew that it came from this tutelary image of so much importance.

"I remarked that the dragon must be far older than Yin Luk, since he was apparently around my own age. It was doubtless at Journey's End when he came into this world.

"Professor Nelson agreed, and said the dragon was centuries old, but so was the Tong, and the custom of reverencing it passed down from one generation to the next. He thought that the Chinese who came first to Journey's End, very likely not Yin himself, though certainly sent by Yin's connivance, came unprepared for the shock of being ushered straight into the presence of the lost treasure. Having already presented the letter of introduction, he did not dare to steal the dragon on the spot, but simply took French leave, forgetting in his excitement his hat and cane. He reported to headquarters and there followed the series of attempted burglaries, culminating in success. As to how the amulet and dragon again came together, he could offer no explanation, except that the same gang probably had a hand in it. It all sounds plausible enough, doesn't it?"

"As for its diabolical qualities, attributed by Yin in his tale to Caroline," Amory went on, "the professor sniffed. He said the members of the Tong might believe it possessed supernatural qualities, doubtless did so believe, and that the amulet, according to their notions, very probably was for the purpose of keeping it in check. He said there was an incredible amount of superstition connected with these tutelary images and no limit to the length the members would go in their respect for

them. He advised the proprietor of the shop to get rid of it at once. If he didn't, he would certainly arrive some morning to find that his place had been robbed.

“To my amusement, the proprietor said he was convinced that the dragon was rightfully my property, and that he would let me have it for the very moderate amount he had paid, a sum that didn't begin to represent its real value as a work of art.

“At this the professor smiled and offered me the same advice, saying if I took it home there would soon be more burglars, for the Tong was undoubtedly again on its track. He said it was an ill thing to harbor, and would probably be a source of trouble until it was disposed of entirely. I asked if the amulet, which really belongs to Carol, was included in the curse and he said he thought not, that it was of importance only so long as the dragon was in existence.”

“And did you buy it?” asked Elizabeth, who had listened absorbed.

“I did. I gave him what he paid for it and I brought it with me to Freeport, but not to Journey's End. That seemed too much like what I told you—coming home to roost, and bringing more trouble with it. I stuck it into one of those steel boxes in the station waiting-room where you check things and bring away the key. Then I thought it

over and concluded that I had a right to destroy the dragon if I wished. I know Aunt Eunice always disliked it and openly said she was glad it was gone; I am quite certain it had an ugly story, for Uncle Robert would never tell me anything about it. Queen Bess, the ivory dragon is reposing in that locker yonder, and when we clear Clam as we shall do in five minutes—you'd better let me take the tiller for it looks pretty choppy—when we are out in open ocean, that dragon is going overboard and I hope it will never rise again. The pendant I took off and shall send back to Caroline."

Presently they rounded Clam and the *Whitewing* keeled over under a stiffer breeze. Elizabeth opened the locker and let out the dragon.

"It is ugly," she observed, "worse than that—it is wicked. I am glad it is never going to live with us. Do you suppose any Chinese knows that you got it again?"

"I don't see how they could. The proprietor said if they inquired for the dragon, he should simply say that he sold it and he promised neither to describe me nor to give my name, which of course I told him. He was quite as anxious as I to get rid of the beast. I think the water is deep enough here, Elizabeth. Throw it over and may it never rise up to trouble any one."

Elizabeth tossed the dragon to leeward and they

both watched it disappear through a green wave. "I am glad it is gone," she said gravely. "I don't think it was 'canny,' as my Scotch nurse used to say. I should always have hated it, for it heard the hateful things I once said to you, Amory."

Amory only smiled and drew her to a seat beside him. After drowning the dragon, he had immediately turned again toward the harbor, but they were far from any other boats. Elizabeth sat within his encircling arm, her head frankly on his shoulder, and they talked of their approaching wedding, set definitely for the middle of October.

"Since we can't sail off in the *Whitewing*, I am going to do something equally unconventional and unheard-of," she said. "I arranged it with Dad, who was delighted, and then broke the news to Mother, who sent for her smelling-salts. I don't quite know what you will say, Amory, but I suppose it is time you knew."

"I'll try to bear up. Go ahead."

"It may prove a shock," said Elizabeth saucily, "to hear that I intend to vanish for an entire week before my wedding, reappearing only the night before. Neither you nor Mother is to know where I am. I'm going to take a trial wedding-trip—with another man!"

Elizabeth didn't get the rise she expected. Amory merely kissed her cheek and laughed a little.

"Dear, that is sweet of you. I have been feeling sorry for your father right along. He does so hate to give you up. I won't even ask where you are going."

"Mother is in despair, but I am going to put it through even though nothing else gets done. I have seen more brides who were half dead with the fuss and confusion of that last week. I was bridesmaid for Connie Haskell and she was so tired that she burst out crying while she was changing into her traveling dress. I will give in to Mother about everything else; I've let her plan a big church wedding, and I've been positively angelic about my clothes—you'll like those dresses, Amory, and Aunt Eunice"—Elizabeth gave a little laugh—"she won't lecture me for any of my hats. But since I am only going across the gardens to Journey's End, Mother hasn't any chance to plan for a house. I told her that we were to have a suite on the second floor, and that you were going to keep the room you've always had, and mine was to be the big front one on the same side with a door cut through to yours. The girls can open all the wedding gifts and list them and Mother can decide anything that comes up—she'd do it anyway, and Dad and I are going off in my car for a week. I shall devote myself to making him have the nicest possible time. I'll tell Aunt Eunice where we shall be, so if there

really is something for which I absolutely have to be consulted, you and you alone will be able to reach me, but aside from that, it is to be a dead secret. I am coming home the night before my wedding perfectly fresh and rested and ready to be the best of comrades."

"You're a brick, Queen Bess. I have pitied more than one poor little bride who was so worn out that she didn't have any fun."

"I shall not be tired, and we'll have no end of fun. And you mustn't feel Dad is unwilling to let me marry you; he isn't, only he hates to give me up. He is so happy to think of our being alone together a whole week. Is it too much to ask of you, Amory?"

"It's nothing compared with what I asked of him. I shall find that week frightfully long and miss you horribly, but I love you for planning it."

"I wish I didn't have to come back to a church wedding. What I'd like best of all is something I can't have, because it isn't my right, and that is an outdoor wedding in the garden of Journey's End. No, it can't be done; Mother would faint at the suggestion. But I'd love it. Was any girl ever married there?"

"Not that I know of. Grandfather Russell had no daughters. Uncle Robert brought Aunt Eunice there as a bride."

"Is that how the house got its name? From 'journeys end in lovers meeting'?"

Amory shook his head. "It has been that for us, hasn't it? But Uncle Robert told me it was rather 'Journeys end in welcome to the weary.' Why not call it both?"

"Sometime," mused Elizabeth, her head still on Amory's shoulder, "the garden at Journey's End shall know a wedding. It can't be that of our son, because he will have to be married from the home of his fiancée. But our daughter"—Elizabeth went on shyly, with down-dropped lashes almost touching her cheek,—"our daughter shall be married in the garden in the time of larkspurs. She will believe it to be entirely her own idea, so tactfully will it be put into her mind."

"Suppose she is a contrary young person who prefers a December wedding?" asked Amory lightly but with an odd note in his voice.

"She will be both good and beautiful, she will obey her mother and look precisely like her father."

"And what?" asked Amory, tightening the arm that encircled Elizabeth and drawing her yet closer, "is the name of this happy little bride?"

"Her name," replied Elizabeth, and a very lovely expression crossed the face she turned to Amory, "will be Eunice."

THE END

